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COVER: Tommy Searle soars back through the pack in the second MX2 moto in Fermo... © Sarah Gutierrez
CONTENTS: ...while his team-mate Joel Roelants drops the hammer in Valkenswaard © Sully





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COMMENT

I can remember when I was young, dumb and full of, er, enthusiasm. In fact, I'd like to think I'm still two of the above although sadly with more hair sprouting outta my back than from the top of my head I'd be kidding myself to think my mental age of at best 14-and-a-half syncs with the physical appearance of someone who's been dragging his sorry ass across the surface of this planet for the last 42 years.

But one guy who definitely ticks all three boxes is Red Bull KTM's 17-year-old enfant terrible Jeffrey Herlings whose Italian brain fart has made him public enemy #1 among UK MX fans. More or less straight out of the gate at the start of race two, the excitable Dutchman hung a right and cleaned out Tommy Searle with the kind of love tap that usually goes down in Soho S&M dungeons. It was a brash, blatant and stupid move but hardly cause for the public burning of effigies of the dastardly little Edam-eater. This is world championship motocross where men are men and boys are men too – if Tommy had nailed Herlings in the same manner we'd be saluting his true British grit. And some time this season I reckon he will and we will.

The truth is, in trying to do what he thought was the right thing Herlings did the wrong thing. But isn't that what so often happens when you're not much more than a kid playing with the grown-ups? Just because he's the second fastest MX2 rider in GPs doesn't change the fact he's also one of the youngest. Tommy's a seasoned pro and the incident will serve to strengthen his resolve – he certainly doesn't need us to fight his battles for him.

As for Jeffers, well, we were all young once so maybe we should cut him a little slack?

While it was all going on in Italy it was, unfortunately, all getting called off back in Blighty where the opening round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals was moved back to this weekend after downpours of Biblical proportions hit the South West and left the paddock and pits at Landrake looking more like a boating lake. The following weekend the AMCA made the same call for their opening MX1 championship round at Foxhill. It takes balls to postpone races and the bigger the races the bigger the back wheels needed when making tough decisions like that.

If this sport we all love is going to survive and thrive through these hard economic times we need to think a little further ahead than what state the track is in. Well, at least we do when we're talking about high-profile races we're hoping to attract members of the public to. I've waded around Foxhill loads of times and to be fair have always managed to make the most of the experience but as a family day out for Mr and Mrs Mainstream and their little ones it would suck more than having some crazy-ass Cloggy trying to make bambinos with you in the first turn at Fermo...

Sean

Arnaud's season goes horribly tits-up at Canada Heights – heal up quick likable Swiss dude

© Ade Cowes/fall



NEWSHAWND!

A DEADLY DOSE OF DIRT-BIKING NEWS FROM THE DESK OF OUR DEPUTY DAWG...

We've got an exclusive sequence of pictures so what do you make of Jeffrey Herlings' move at the start of the second moto in Fermo?

There's no denying that the Dutch destroyer purposefully moves across on Tommy Searle and then stands on the brakes but does he really mean to take Tommy out or just slow his progress? Only one person knows the answer to that and after bull sh*tting about having a damaged front wheel and no front brake after that incident do you think we're ever gonna get an honest answer out of him? I think not!

What I do think is that Tommy's now gonna be way more motivated to kick the KTM star's ass than ever before and although he's already 35 points down in the championship chase he's gonna be pushing hard to decrease the gap!

Interestingly enough, even before the Italian GP Tommy's cracking starts seemed to have the KTM team worried as they break out a 2011 factory engine for Herlings to use in Fermo. That motor seems to get the bike off the line much better than this year's factory powerplant as proved countless times already by relative class heavyweight Jake Nicholls.

British 125cc champ back in 1994, Neil Prince is now in charge of Britain's Motocross des Nations team replacing Steve Dixon. It seems that Steve and the ACU couldn't agree whether

bringing Dean Wilson over for Lommel was the right thing to do or not – the ACU figured we've got plenty of local talent we can use in the team and shouldn't be forking out megabucks to bring over our Scottish/Canadian buddy while Steve obviously thought otherwise...

While that's not necessarily a bad thing for Dixon, what went down at Canada Heights definitely was as Arnaud Tonus managed to scrub himself out of the running for this year's MX2 world championship joining team-mate Zach Osborne on the sidelines. Leading on lap one of race one, Tonus got a bit buckwild on a watered jump face and threw his Monster Energy Yamaha away. His bouncing bike collected Graeme Irwin who had been running a close second – saving Yamaha a fortune in performance related bonuses. While Irwin escaped with just a concussion, Tonus broke his scaphoid and as a result has missed the first few grands prix. On the plus side that crash gave t'other team-mate Mel Pocock's bid to become British champion a real boost as his two closest rivals were wiped out in one go. The ginger ninja now takes the red plate into round three.

Ryan Villopoto wrapped up the SX championship four rounds early then proceeded to write off his knee in the most innocent looking crash ever at his home round in Seattle just one week later. As undercover media-mogul Eli Moore blogged 'Knees are such pussies, just tearing and sh*t. Laziest part



of your whole body. Like seriously, BRO, why don't you get off your ass and do your f*cking job holding my leg together? They just expect to be pandered to, waited on hand and foot while the rest of your body is working its balls off to put food on the table. And right when things aren't going perfectly, they're just out. Ingrates'. About sums things up in my mind...

So does that mean Ryan Dungey and KTM are set for a summer of dominance outdoors or will Officer James Stewart sort out his problems and come kick some ass for a team unknown? I guess we'll find out in due time...

Three rounds into the world championship series and Youthstream have finally finalised their schedule, replacing the TBA race with a round at Faenza. This is good for two reasons – Faenza is an awesome track and Tommy absolutely rips there. Not a million miles from Imola (as written about in this month's Burnicle's Beat) it's seriously an awesome place to be and not a million miles from Bologna's international airports so get yourself there to see Tommy close in on his first world crown.

DBR test pilot Ed 'The Shred' Bradley has been a busy boy of late testing bikes and stuff for us, prepping Doncaster Moto Parc to perfection and developing the all-new MX Coach app that'll help you get fitter and faster but unfortunately no better looking – sorry, Fred. The app creates structure and in doing so riders' focus, concentration and motivation improves instantly. There are five training sessions within the app – a rider fitness test, podium, pyramid intervals, Fartlek and hot laps. Each session has its own specific stopwatch and all data is stored in the app's history allowing the rider to track their own progress as well as giving immediate feedback to show you the areas you need to improve.

An additional feature to the app is for mechanics and those who like to test different products or settings on their machines. The bike test does away with using a pen, journal and stopwatch all at the

same time. The app records the bike's components and allows you to make changes to your machine, test 'em and then compare the difference in lap times they have made. Available now from the app store – search for MX Coach – or for a free preview visit www.deviantapps.com.

I know it's pretty much ancient news right now but there were a couple of funny moments that popped out at the Valkenswaard GP that definitely need a mention. First of all Chiara Fontanesi's champagne celebration on the WMX podium was pure gold! The speedy Italian sasstress had just gone out and smoked the world's fastest women so she had plenty to celebrate which is exactly what she did – stylishly too! I heart that girl...

The second rib tickler came moments before the opening MX3 moto of the day. I'd been shooting the sh*t with our only British qualifier Jamie Law before I decided to wander off and take some shots of the Monster girls or summat. Only thing was I had a slight problem getting over the startgate on my way, snagged a foot and went down like a sack of sh*t. Good thing it was only MX3 so there was nobody there to see it. "Mate, I couldn't stop laughing – I hope someone got it on film," J-Law said later. "I was really nervous up until then but I felt quite good after that. The leg that got stuck had like 10 goes at getting free while you were falling. No injuries I hope..."

The distraction certainly does Jamie no harm as he runs 9-6 to take seventh overall. When I ask the pro pest exterminator if he fancies doing the rest of the series he says it's just not possible. "I'm broke now. I'll go and catch some more rats and save up to do another one. I could be right up there in this championship but I don't care because I'm number one rat catcher in the world! Now go get some ice on that leg..."

Steve Turner's finding out just how expensive it is to go GP racing and suffers some bad luck in Romania where the local authorities stitch him up as the STR squad travel to the Bulgarian round of the series. Certain European countries still require you

to purchase 'road tax' as you enter the country and corrupt coppers like to hang out at the other end to try and catch you out. After traversing the length of Transylvania – which is no easy task – the bent blood-suckers managed to spot that Steve had somehow ignored all the signs that invited him to 'buy your vignette here' and was travelling tax free. So they took everyone's passports, impounded the truck and banged up all the team members for good measure. Luckily, Steve was able to release enough funds to pay the fine and whatnot and the team, truck, Steve, Ben and his better looking brother Toby Carvery were all free to go on their merry way. Hoo-rah!

Dates for your diaries time now and what a month May is proving to be with the rescheduled Red Bull Pro Nationals and British Masters both going off on May 12/13, another round of the British Sprint Enduro Championship happening at Enduroland on May 19/20 then it's the fourth round of the Maxxis at Milton Moto Park on May 27.

Another event worth a look this month is Dirt Quake which is set to rock Coventry Speedway on the evening of May 19. As well as being the second round of the GNC Flat Track championship the event will also host vintage speedway races as well as flat track racing for blokes on unsuitable road bikes and even choppers. The whole thing's bound to be carnage and as well as all the oval action there'll be bands, birds, beer and burgers.

A few weeks later MT3 Events bring high-flying FMX action to South Wales as the Big Air Jam comes to Scarlets Stadium in Llanelli on Wednesday June 6. All the UK's leading freestylers will be there throwing down big tricks in the Best Run, Best Trick and Best Whip categories and there'll also be some cunning stunts performed too by top trials rider Gary Jenkins and BMX dirt jumper Kye 'Trusthouse' Forte. Gates open at five and the action kicks off two hours later – that's 7pm for you folk who ain't too good with the numbers. For advance tickets call 0871 8718088 or visit www.bigairjam.com for more details.



Chiara's celebrations are bang on the money in Valkenswaard



Jamie Law (#12) gets ready to roost over the Dawg-shaped dip in front of his startgate



Tip-top chop dirt track action





WIN! WIN! WIN!

AN AWESOME **DRIFT HD** PACKAGE...

Filming funanigans POV stylee is what all the cool kids are up to these days and you can get in on the craze n'all by winning this wangtacular Drift HD package that includes a camera, two hats, two tees, a power pack and a suction mounting cup in our free and easy to enter competition.

Compact, durable and easy to use, the Drift HD is brand-new on the POV camera scene but is set to stir things right up. Weighing next to nowt, the Drift HD comes with an LCD playback screen that makes lining up shots a reality and also allows you to watch footage back straight away.

As well as shooting High Definition video the Drift HD also shoots nine megapixel stills like a redneck shoots squirrels, has a built-in microphone and speaker and is water resistant too. Our favourite feature though is the fully rotatable lens which means it's possible to shoot horizontal footage no matter

what angle the camera is mounted – unless you're Geoff Walker *wink*...

To win this outstanding prize package that our bally good buddies at FreestyleXtreme and Action Retailer have lovingly pulled together we need you to answer a crazy easy question – in the context of a Drift HD camera what does the HD stand for?

Is it:
A: High Definition
B: Harley Davidson
C: Home Depot
D: Hilda Doolittle

Think you know the answer? Then log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the **QR code** that will take you directly to our homepage. Then follow the competitions link to dirtZone, fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The comp closes on **June 8** and the winner will be the first correct answer drawn at random after this date.



RC UNIVERSITY!

LEARN FROM THE LEGEND
AT FATCAT MOTOPARC...

American legend Ricky Carmichael is gearing up to bring his riding school to the UK for a two-day motocrossing masterclass at FatCat Motoparc near Doncaster on June 18-19.

As well as lessons from the great man himself, students at the Ricky Carmichael University will get the chance to learn from former champs Jeff Emig, Jeff Stanton and Jamie Dobb with current GP star Tommy Searle riding shotgun for the two days.

"We're excited to be able to give students from around the world the opportunity to take part in RCU," says RC. "It's amazing to see this turn into an international event!"

With such a world-class line-up of legends taking care of the teaching duties it's a no-brainer to expect instruction of the highest calibre. Students will be schooled in all aspects of racing from proper body positioning to utilising organised drills focusing on flat turns, rhythm sections and improved braking techniques.

The RCU began life in 2010 as an opportunity for riders of all ages and skill levels to learn from the GOAT in conjunction with the Ricky Carmichael Amateur Supercross at Daytona International Speedway. Due to the expansion of racing in 2012, Daytona was no longer able to facilitate RCU so the riding school has shifted focus to Lake Elsinore in California and now FatCat Motoparc.

For more information and to book your place go to www.mxsports.com or contact RCUEurope@rickycarmichael.com.



THE REVEREND THRILLS AND SPILLS!

IT'S BEEN A FUNNY KIND OF MONTH FOR JAKE BUT DESPITE A FEW DISAPPOINTMENTS HE KNOWS HE'S FINALLY RUNNING TOP FIVE SPEED...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Suttty

Hi everyone, I hope you're all good. Everything has now properly kicked off in our racing world which means I'm bloody busy! I'm currently sat at home in Belgium watching the Anglia news thanks to Sky and they're reporting how a couple of the main roads are flooded due to constant rain. It's strange as we're not that far away here but we've had half the amount of rain although it's hardly been sunny or warm. Hopefully it changes soon so the races can get back under way properly.

I'm gutted I'm not able to race Lyng this weekend, it's definitely my favourite British track and it's quite local to me too. Unfortunately we have an international race in Belgium that Nestaan (our team's major sponsor) is backing so I'm obliged to race there.

Last time I wrote it was the lead up to Valkenswaard – that weekend seems like ages ago now. It went pretty well for me, though I did have some issues. Sunday was top banana and I holed the heat race and lead for five laps before finishing fourth. But on Monday morning I had a big crash in the warm-up on lap three and hit my head really hard – I split my helmet open and I didn't feel too smokey after it.

I went straight back to the camper and I honestly thought the weekend was over for me as my vision was a complete shambles. I laid down for an hour and we all thought the day was finished but after a rest I came around a bit and said I was up for it. I holed the first race and finished fifth to equal my best ever finish. We were all surprised and I didn't really know what to think to be honest. Second race I crashed on lap one and came back to ninth for sixth overall.

The following week I had to rest as I was so sore from my morning crash and on Wednesday I could barely stand up my back was spasming that much and I still had bad headaches too. But I managed to get a ride in on Friday before a Dutch championship at Emmen on the Sunday.

The track was pretty average – fast, sandy with big single jumps. I lost my goggles on lap two of the first race and finished fourth with half the track in my eyes. The second race I was chasing down my team-mate Glen for second and I had a huge crash with five minutes to go off a single when I changed ruts to avoid a lapper. I nosedived and landed directly down on the front wheel and was seeing stars for a lap but managed to stay in fourth. I was upset after this race as I would have had a podium result and I haven't had a podium at one of the Dutch rounds yet. I was upset about having another big crash too as it's not normal for me.

Leading up to Bulgaria we rode hardpack and I felt comfortable. Bulgaria went quite well and I qualified third which is my best ever qualifying but Sunday wasn't quite as good as I chose the wrong tyre in moto one against Jacky and Goldentyre's advice and it bit me in the ass after three laps. I struggled like hell and it was

one of those races I couldn't wait to be over.

The second race I was fired up for a good one, led for a few corners and was in third on lap two when I crashed in a really slippery corner that had been watered.

I got up in 13th place and my head was gone – I was so angry that I had lost the great position I was in and I knew deep down that at that track it was going to be really tough for me to make up any ground. I rode like a lunatic trying to pass people in every corner, burned myself out and ended up 12th – another big disappointment for myself but I was still sixth in the championship.

We moved on to Italy the next weekend and Tom who lives with Blu and I in Belgium mothertrucked down there on the Thursday/Friday. I was a bit gutted not to be able to help out with the driving but I still don't have my HGV. We arrived midday and the sun was right out on parade which was a nice sight. I love the track there in Fermo and was excited to ride it again but as usual at GPs they left the sprinklers on for about 94 hours too long and there were a few actual bogs in the first couple of practices, even though it was 25 degrees.

The qualifying race was cool though as I holed shot and lead for two full laps. It was cool to see on my pitboard on the second lap 'pulling away' – I was like 'yeeewwwwww!' But I'm struggling to tag on to people when they pass me at the minute and I ended up fifth in that race. I'm sure it's because I haven't been able to do much intensity training recently as I always seem to be recovering from some kind of crash or illness. But that's all out of the way now and I'm cracking on with some real specific training.

Sunday went pretty well in Italy and I got fourth in the first race which is my best ever finish in a GP race which was cool as! In the second race after Tommy and Herlings came together I was gifted with third place on the first lap but we chose the wrong tyre again as they absolutely soaked the track for the second race. It takes the absolute piss and I was so angry, it was like an ice rink for the early laps. At the time I would have loved to have smacked the track co-ordinator or whatever in the face with a good right hand!

Then I landed short off a tiny jump while in fifth and bounced into a braking bump and hyper-extended my wrist. My hand came completely off the throttle and the bike stalled – I got it going but my wrist was toast. I was so gutted as if ever there was an opportunity for top three it was there. I couldn't carry on with my wrist and went straight in for x-rays which showed nothing serious but a haematoma in the ligament which is nothing too bad.

So it's Thursday now and I'm still icing it but it's getting better. Thanks for reading and catch up with you all next month!

Go hard #45

J. Nicholls
dirtbikeriden 15





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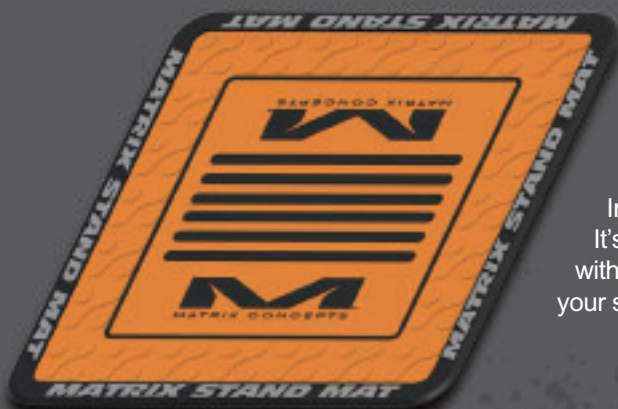
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OFF AND ON!

RAIN FORCES NEW DATE
FOR LANDRAKE RBP

It may have been great weather for ducks but the heavy rains that lashed the South West at the end of April forced Events 22, promoters of the Red Bull Pro Nationals, to postpone the opening round of their flagship series. The Landrake meeting was pushed back two weeks and now runs this weekend (May 12-13).

"I was gutted to have to make the call," says Events 22 big cheese Matt Bates, "but we weren't prepared to take the chance of spectators and riders turning up to a mud bath. A couple of years ago we did the same thing at Landrake and we were vindicated then and this time around I'm confident we made the right decision.

"I was down at Landrake last Sunday when we should have been racing and the weather there was simply atrocious. It would have been absolutely impossible to run the meeting.

"The long-range forecast is looking a lot better for the new date so fingers crossed we'll get the Red Bull Pro Nationals under way at the second attempt."

For more details of this year's series and up to date information check out the website at www.redbullpronationals.com

EVENING GLORY!

RHAYADER READY TO ROCK
AT CWMYTHIG HILL...

Every bit an early summer British institution as heavy rain and gale force winds, the Rhayader club's Wednesday evening motocross series is scheduled for two dates this year with races on June 6 and July 4 at the fast and challenging Cwmythig Hill track in mid-Wales.

Even with seasonal showers the series is a firm favourite with fans and racers and whatever the weather you can be sure of a big spectator turn-out, attracted by some top names and the guaranteed electric on-track action that comes with them.

In the past top names including Brad Anderson, Gordon Crockard and Tom Church have all banged bars in the series.

Classes are unchanged for this year with Pro/Experts, Seniors/Juniors and Novices/Beginners all getting three races each with a big-money Grand Final for the fastest riders closing the evening's entertainment.

Entry forms are available on the club's website at www.rdmcc.co.uk or by sending an SAE to Miss Amanda Bates, Rose-Bank, East Street, Rhayader, Powys LD6 5EH. For more info call Andrew James on 01597 810396.



CROCKSTAR

CROCKODILE DUNDEE?

GORDY MAY WELL BE HEADING DOWN UNDER AGAIN FOR ANOTHER SPELL IN OZ BUT BEFORE THAT THERE ARE RACES TO BE WON AND SICKLY SWEET BOOZE TO BE AVOIDED...

Words by Gordon Crockard Photo by Suttty

Howdy! Isn't it amazing how much of a dummy you can feel whenever you're taken out of your specialist field and faced with a topic or task that you're not educated or experienced in? And then isn't it pathetic the excuses you come up with and the areas where you send the blame?

It's funny when you see other people suffer from it when you are protected with knowledge and skill but it sure as sh*t isn't funny when you're the dummy that hasn't got a clue! We all have to start somewhere and have all been beginners at everything. Think back to your first time doing something and remember how much you sucked at it? And then compare yourself to how you are now doing the same task.

It's vital to understand the learning process that riders are faced with when you are trying to deliver a role in developing their abilities and teach them new skills. That goes for whatever the relationship is or the standard of rider. A dad and son relationship is the most common and in my opinion the most difficult to produce enjoyment and joint satisfaction in success at the same time. A lot of the time you'll find that the motivating factor that drives the son is the desire to seek their father's approval. The son is merely wanting the great almighty judge to be proud and impressed with his own creation. This crosses over to any set-up where the rider wants to impress someone who they hold in high regard or whose opinion they value. Anyway, this is DBR – not some self-help hardback you've bought because you're lost in the world and need to find your soul.

There have been some developments since my last column. I tore my groin in a motocross crash, I lifted my fingernail off in a trail riding incident, I am fitter and stronger as a result of brutal cycling and mountain exploration, the skin on my hands is now back to caveman's feet spec due to many hours gripping onto Renthals, I managed to lose all the numbers in my mobile phone which stretched back over 11 years and I've learned that Southern Comfort isn't that comforting no matter how south you are. So all in all I'm the same but different.

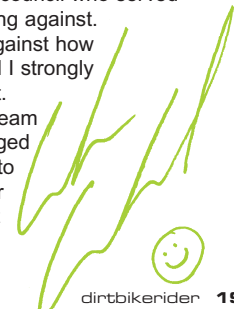
Racing for me has been okay, I had a crappy run out on Easter Monday at Desertmartin followed by a better performance at Athlone the next weekend. I got injured at Tandragee and had to take two weeks off from motocross riding to let my groin heal up. On the plus side – for me – the first round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals got postponed due to bad weather for two weeks so my groin injury will hopefully be healed in time for me to show up and race at Landrake.

Interestingly, on May 1 I got a call from Craig Anderson in Australia asking me if I can come out and do the rest of the series as a replacement rider on his Berry Sweet Yamaha team. I have commitments here and not much time to prepare considering my injury and having to change brands from Kawasaki to Yamaha. The financial agreement has to be completed too so I'm in the thick of trying to get a decision finalised ASAP.

I was in court the other day for the hearing of my case on my practice track being closed due to a noise abatement order the council served me on January 6. The judge granted permission for me to carry out an independent re-test by court recognised noise measuring experts and therefore we can challenge how the council's test readings are incorrect. The next hearing date is now set for June 18 when the judge will set a date for the final hearing. The costs of this can be huge for both me and the council and what sickens me the most is the fact that the lady doing the complaining about the noise doesn't have to pay a penny. It's the council/taxpayer (you and I) who have to pay for their court costs as it's the council who served the order that I am appealing against.

I have many opinions against how the legal system works and I strongly disagree with so much of it. I guess I'm bitter too as a team I rode for in the past managed to use the flaws in the law to avoid paying me, even after the judge in the High Court ordered it.

All the hairy chest...



BIG AIR JAM



WIN! WIN! WIN!

**FIVE PAIRS OF VIP BIG AIR JAM
TICKETS UP FOR GRABS...**

Mark Thomas is one of the many unsung heroes of our sport and does a whole heap of good to promote motocross and off-road sports in a positive light around the South Wales area with his various schemes and community projects. That's why whenever we have the opportunity to get behind Mark and shower him with our support we jump right in and grasp it – that's the opportunity – with both hands!

Mark's latest mission to bring motocross to the masses is with this summer's Big Air Jam FMX fest that heads to Parc y Scarlets near Llanelli for an evening of high-flying action on **Wednesday June 6**.

The premise is simple, bring together the UK's best FMX stars and make 'em do battle until a winner is found – it's basically gonna be awesome...

While absolutely anyone can see this battle of the big hitters inside the superb Scarlets Stadium for just £12

(less if you're a nipper or you book in advance at

www.scarlets.co.uk) we're gonna give you the chance to win one of five pairs of **VIP tickets** that'll not only let you

see all the action from the sweetest of seats but also allow you to enjoy a two-course hot buffet, complimentary use of the fairground, on-site parking, access to a private pit party and Big Air Jam goodie bags too. Blimey!

To be in with a chance of winning one of these immense prize packages all you have to do is answer this easy question. Who is the current UK FMX champion?

Is it: **A: Chris Brock**
B: Chris Rock
C: Chris Birch
D: Silver Birch
E: The Silver Surfer
F: Planet of the Apes

When you've figured out the answer go to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the **QR code** which will take you directly to our homepage. Then follow the competitions link to dirtZone, fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The comp closes on **June 1** and the winners will be the first five correct answers drawn at random after this date.

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DANGEROUS

NEWBIE!

WITH SWORDY RIDING SHOTGUN OVER ON TMX WITH HIS NEW COLUMN WE'RE DELIGHTED TO ANNOUNCE AMCA CHAMP LEE 'DANGEROUS' DUNHAM AS THE LATEST MEMBER OF THE DBR DREAM TEAM...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by Sutty

When someone asks you to write a column, an essay or just any words in general why is it that the first line is always tricky? Well a huge thanks to DBR magazine for asking me to write this column and for giving me this opportunity – also a big thank you to spell checker because my speeeellin iz nott the beast...

Well as usual the start of any racing year is pretty packed with sorting bits and pieces out making sure everything's perfect for when we race. This year has been particularly tough mainly because of the weather being so up and down! We trekked over to France to ride at Dunkirk a couple of times. The first time I couldn't believe it. The whole track was frozen solid. Within 30 minutes I had ripped the knobbles from the tyres! Crazy! We were also going to stop off in Belgium for a few days that week and ride there but Marc de Reuver advised us to come home and ride the sand tracks we have here which were in better condition and not so frozen. A nice little boat trip later and we put some motos down at FatCat.

As you guys are no doubt aware I race for Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki and the team workshops are miles from my house so when I ride up near there I usually stop in a little place we call the Cabin de Lux – it's so much easier than the journey home but there are a couple of massive issues though! My boarder Parmie and Conner's mechanic Minty are the loudest sleep talkers, snorers and fidgeters ever! Minty's now banned to a different room because of sounding like a one man band bless him. On a serious note though it's a pretty cool set-up where we can chill and play PS2.

The team and my dad have been working hard on my bike. We have a really good base setting now with suspension and my engine is pretty strong too. Andy Pringle, Elvis Tedo and Ben James – Steve's son – popped down for a full day's riding at Leigh Delemere MX

track to help get this all sorted.

Training's gone good and as my year seems to start later than most championships we can get things ironed out early so hopefully we should be okay for the races. The first round of the MX1 AMCA British championship was meant to have been at Foxhill this weekend but has been cancelled because of the weather which is a bit of a bummer! The home rounds are easy compared to IMBA international races – when we do the Euros it's pretty tough having to race all day, then usually dad's tired with driving at around 12ish at night so I jump in and drive as far as I can through the night until morning. We rush back to try and make work. Usually I'm not the most helpful in the office after those weekends but surely I get brownie points for being there, right?

Last week I did a small group tuition which was cool – it was bright sunshine in the morning and then hailed in the afternoon. Everyone involved rode exceptionally well and listened really well too. It's so good seeing people putting in a lot of effort and then getting the rewards.

It's a Tuesday today which is a really hard day at work and afterwards a huge group of us meet up and go cycling on roadies racing around Castle Coombe. Our group is like Last Man Standing – everyone gives it their all in a group until there's only one left – so far it's been raining both times I've been this year and last week Zebo, Turbo Taylor and Paul were on it so I'm gonna have to get my act together and stop cycling like an awkward turtle! Either that or buy a moped to chase 'em on...

Well that's this month's column done and dusted. The next time I write one hopefully I'll have some good news on the races. Hope you all have a good weekend's racing wherever you're at. And keep it on two wheels because all those points make prizes!



WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

RED BULL PRO NATIONALS VIP PACKAGE UP FOR GRABS

Fancy watching the country's top pros, youth riders and two-stroke pilots banging bars around one of the country's top tracks? Or seeing some of the world's leading FMX stars in action? And what about experiencing all of the above while enjoying the full VIP treatment?

Well we've teamed up with Events 22, promoters of the awesome Red Bull Pro Nationals, to give one lucky reader the chance to do all three and, what's more, they can bring a mate, loved one or even a frenemy along for the ride!

Up for grabs are two VIP tickets to round three of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at Canada Heights on July 7-8 and the winner and their guest of honour will also each get a Red Bull Pro Nationals hoody, Red Bull Pro Nationals lanyard, glossy souvenir programme and an invitation to join the

awesomely finger-lickin' Red Bull BBQ on the Sunday afternoon.

To be in with a chance of winning all you need to do is tell us who won the 2011 Red Bull Pro Nationals MX2 championship.

Was it: **A: Billy Elliot**
B: Elliott Banks-Browne
C: Elliott Gould
D: Elliott Ness

Think you know the answer? Then log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the **QR code** that will take you directly to our homepage. Then follow the competitions link to dirtZone, fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The comp closes on **June 29** with the winner the first correct answer drawn at random after this date.





GOSH, IT'S JOSH!

COPPINS SET FOR EURO RETURN

Everyone's favourite Kiwi – unless you're a BT fan – Josh Coppins is set to jet back to the UK at the end of this month for a whistle-stop tour of his old stomping grounds.

The GP-winning former British champ is all set to turn his wheels in Maxxis action for the first time since a one-off ride at Duns in 2010 at round four of the series at Milton Park on May 27.

Riding for the Fro Systems/IDS Yamaha team, Josh's next date is at round two of the Red Bull Pro Nationals at FatCat Motoparc on June 2/3 before he signs off at a Belgian international at Kester on June 24.

Alongside Josh's other main sponsors – Fox, Renthal, Rockstar Energy, Dunlop, Alpinestars and Scott goggles – tremendous backing for his trip has come from Polisport plastics, Samco Sport, Pro Carbon and Evoke Concepts.

With the use of the Fro Systems motocross and supercross track during his stay, Josh will be able to get some pre-race training in and make any alterations to the bike set-up. Suspension, pipes and other optional extras are currently being shipped over so that Josh – who's currently racing in the Aussie national series – feels right at home on the privateer Yamaha and is ready to make a competitive appearance at the top level in the UK.

"I am very excited about Josh coming back," says Team Manager Mark McCann. "We are good friends and I really miss him being at the GPs. It's probably going to be my last time to see him race and luckily I will be even more involved than usual. Obviously having a very good chance of winning is going to make it even more special. We have put in a lot of time and effort as a team so we are giving it our best shot."



MAX POWER

BURNING DESIRE!

IT'S NOT BEEN A DREAM START TO THE SEASON FOR MAX AND HE WANTS TO WIN SO BADLY HE CAN ALMOST TASTE IT...

Words by Max Anstie Photo by Suttly

I live every day just to get that feeling of winning once more. I think once you have had the experience of winning that is all you live for. Just one more time, then the next day you want it again. I have scraped the bottom of the barrel time and time again over the last three years. And what keeps me digging and working is to get that feeling again. I don't race to get second, fourth or 10th – I race to win. And I won't be happy until I do.

So what I have learned over the last few years is that nothing is ever perfect. No matter what, nothing will run smooth. Today I just had a bad day. Well a bad weekend. For some reason nothing went right, nothing felt right and I had my back against the wall. But what I have also learned is that championships are not won on your good days but on the bad ones.

I know it sounds simple and logical but actually when you are having a bad day it is so easy to throw it away, give up or crash your brains out. Anyway, after a bad day I do feel as if I made the best of the situation and actually came out of it better than I went into it. So the next thing to do is go back to the drawing board and over the next 10 days get our asses ready for Mexico.

The season has started out okay. I mean it has not been amazing but it's been okay. I have been riding good, strong and had some good races. It's the first time in my life that I can see we are on the right path. We are no way world champions – yet – but we will be. My team is working well with me and we have a good direction. I feel good here for once. But I am just gonna keep digging in and banging in

those laps. Because I know my time is near. I will stand on top soon.

So my dad has been delivering baby goats and by that I mean actually pulling them out of the momma goat. Rough. So he is up to 14 goats, four dogs, my lil bro and sis plus three English kids all at the Anstie ranch. Meanwhile, in my spare time – which I don't seem to get a lot of – I've been studying hard with my college work. It's really hard though but I'm getting there.

Mexico is next and I'm excited to go there. I have never been to Mexico even though it's only an hour or so from San Diego and I live 40 minutes from there. I think it's going to be a massive culture shock for most of the boys. I can imagine it is going to be so different down there. And let's just hope that we will actually have bikes when we arrive and everything hasn't been nicked. Plus let's hope we don't get kidnapped and held for ransom.

All of my neighbours are Mexican and they're really nice but even they have said that the area where we are going to be is bad! I have heard that Brazil is supposed to be really nice this year though. Apparently it's in a massive theme park. So that will be nice to see. Then I have also heard that next year the season is going to start in Thailand and then go to Dubai before coming to Holland, then they want to put one more in South America!

We have 10 days before we get on a plane for 10 hours to New York, then we have a nine-hour lay-over there before we get on a plane for another 10 hours to Mexico City!

See ya in Matterley!

Max



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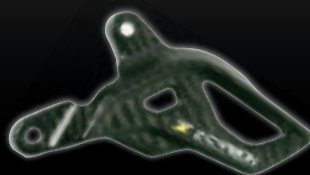


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TOMMY SEARLE

THIS MONTH BRITAIN'S BEST BET FOR A 2012 WORLD MX CROWN PULLS BITS OF JEFFREY HERLINGS OUT OF HIS TEETH BEFORE BRACING HIMSELF FOR A GOOD PROBING...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Suttty

Q: As you enter your second year with Team Florida do you feel that this season is going to be 'your' season?

Alex Barker, Dawlish

A: "Yeah, I feel confident. The team is good – they've worked hard, I've worked hard. It's my last year in MX2 so hopefully I can win the world title."

Q: Do you feel that you have unfinished business in the US and is the plan to return there one day?

Jeff Tracey, Oxford

A: "Maybe one day but right now I'm totally focused on Europe."

Q: Having seen you and your dad on Homes Under the Hammer is property development something you'll be moving into when you retire from MX?

Dave Browne, Clapton

A: "I have property now and it's a good investment so I'm sure I'll do something along those lines in the future."

Q: You've had some good outings on the 450 bike – was there an option to ride MX1 this year?

Paul Inglett, Ascot

A: "It would've been an option if I'd pushed for it – I wanted to do one last season in MX2 but MX1 is my future."

Q: As it's been a day or two since Dobber won Britain's last world title do you feel the weight of a nation on your shoulders or is it something you don't think too much about?

Ian Middleton, The Gower

A: "Not really. I like all the support from fans, it really drives me. It really pushes me to give it my all and that's all I can do."

Q: I saw you ride at the Red Bull Pro Nationals last year – will we get the chance to see you at anything other than the British GP this year?

Marcus Richards, Hastings

A: "At the moment no but that might change so we'll have to wait and see."

Q: I thought we might see you riding the West Coast SX this year, was there a particular reason that you didn't?

Nathan Williams, Portishead

A: "No, not really, I just wanted to put all of my focus into racing and doing my best in Europe."

Q: If you could change one moment in your career what would it be?

Tom Leeves, Wigan

A: "There's not really a lot I would change. Obviously I would've liked to have won a world championship by now but where I am now, I'm in a good position."

Q: How much has your programme changed since Jamie Dobb started helping you out?

Paul Connell, Wyke Regis

A: "Jamie has helped since I was 14 so he pretty much made the programme I'm on now. I really enjoy working with him and my trainer."

Q: The American tracks always look amazing on TV – are they really any better than the tracks we've got in Europe and what would you say is the biggest difference?

Joe Cripps, Liverpool

A: "They are fun to ride but GP tracks are a lot more creative – the track we just rode on in Italy was really good and made really good racing. There's also a lot of culture round the European tracks and I find that cool."

Q: Are you now based in the UK and if so do you have any plans to race the British championship in the future?

Simon Roberts, Worcester

A: "At the moment I have no plans to ride in the British championship but I am based here and I love it."

Q: What areas have you been working on through the winter to try and land the championship this season?

Steven Hayden, Norfolk

A: "Just a few small things. My speed – I try to work on that a lot so hopefully that's enough and everything else will fall into place."

Q: If you had to list your favourite tracks in the world what would they be?

Liam Doble, Kidderminster

A: "Matterley Basin – because it's in Great Britain and also because the crowd is always amazing – and Red Bud which I think is one of the best tracks in the world and the ground is really nice there. To be honest I have fun riding on most tracks."

Q: Keith Lemon, Holly Willoughby and Fearnie Cotton – marry one, have a one night stand with one and go on a cruise with one...

Phil Bennett, Birmingham

A: "Ha ha! I'd have a one night stand with Keith Lemon, marry Holly and go on a cruise with Fearnie."

Q: Have you ever had a go on Tarmac and if so were you any good?

Grant Hamilton, Chard

A: "I did have a go when I was about 12. Somebody paid for me to do a track day. I think I was pretty good but I think if you're good on a MX bike you can be pretty good on a road bike. I crashed near the end of the day though and that was it. Once you crash on one of those tracks you can't get back on."

EVGENY BOBRY SHEV

BOBBY DAZZLER

Next month we've got the former British MX1 champ and current factory Honda star waiting to answer your questions so fire them off to us at dbprprobe@googlemail.com

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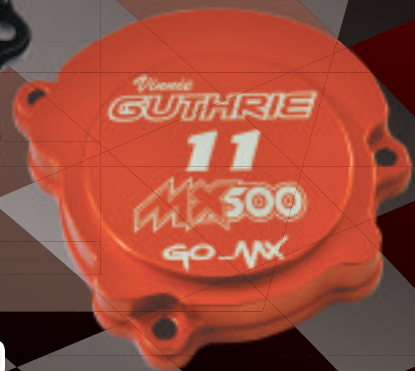
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GO-MX

DT'S DUO!

IT'S THE TURN OF PHOENIX TOOLS HONDA'S MAARTEN CREMERS AND JACKSON EVANS TO DISH THE DIRT – ON THEMSELVES!

Interview and photos by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

MC: "Matt Damon."

JE: "Russell Brand."

DBR: When did you last clean an air filter?

MC: "Today!"

JE: "What's an air filter?"

DBR: Could you check your valve clearances?

MC: "I could check them but they wouldn't be right."

JE: "Yes, I would watch and copy Maarten..."

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

MC: "Nando's every day!"

JE: "Nando's every day with Maarten..."

DBR: You're in second and on the leader's rear wheel – do you take him out in the last corner for the win?

MC: "Of course!"

JE: "No, I pass him clean and fair – NOT!"

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas?

MC: "Yes, they are actually a pair of lederhosen my dad gave me and have been passed down from generation to generation. The leather is going a bit stiff in the crotch region but this helps me get up in the morning."

JE: "Yes, they are soft and fluffy with dinosaurs all over. I don't wear them if I am with a girl – unless she asks me to!"

DBR: What is the highlight of your career so far?

MC: "Being involved with this team is a highlight but I guess in result terms finishing in the top 20 in the British championship and on the rostrum in the South West champs at the end of the year."

JE: "Hmm...I'd have to think about that? Do you mean in motocross or with girls?"

DBR: What car do you drive?

MC: "I drive a BMW."

JE: "I drive my van everywhere."

DBR: What car would you drive if money were no object?

MC: "I would still drive my BMW. It's awesome!"

JE: "I would still drive my van as I can't get a mattress in the back of a car."

DBR: Have you ever blamed a poor result on a non-existent mechanical issue?

MC: "I may have blamed a poor result on a mechanical issue I thought was there which turned out not to be."

JE: "No, never. Any mechanical problems with my bike were definitely there at the time and I can't help it if you can't find it after the race!"

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

MC: "I would be a few seconds a lap faster."

JE: "Are you kidding me? Look at me!"

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

MC: "I would love to go riding with Ricky Carmichael and Chad Reed."

JE: "I'd love to go riding with Russell Brand."

DBR: If you could have any superpower for a week what would it be?

MC: "To shrink all my weekly training and riding into one minute so I could spend more time at Nando's."

JE: "To have the Lynx effect – oh, I have!"

DBR: If you were shipwrecked on an island what three things would you want with you?

MC: "Nuts magazine, iPhone, iPhone charger."

JE: "iPhone, iPhone charger and a solar-powered generator (Maarten just doesn't think ahead)!"

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?

MC: "My Nando's discount card."

JE: "My iPhone."

DBR: Favourite race you've ever been in?

MC: "Milton Park British championship 2011."

JE: "My next race is going to be my favourite."

DBR: Be honest now, how often do you Google yourself?

MC: "Once a month when I update it."

JE: "Google update me daily..."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

MC: "Blonde."

JE: "Both!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

MC: "I don't know, I've never done either."

JE: "No, I'd put sex in front and in any case, only having sex on a Sunday afternoon after 20 minutes practice wouldn't really do it for me."

DBR: One thing about your riding style that you'd like to improve?

MC: "I need to stand up more."

JE: "You obviously haven't seen me ride."

DBR: What's your favourite film?

MC: "Bruce Almighty."

JE: "Snatch."

DBR: Sun, sea and sangria or snow, skis and Sambuca?

MC: "Snow every time."

JE: "Sun(bed)!"

DBR: What's the worst motocross related decision you've made during your career?

MC: "I have pulled out of some races which perhaps I shouldn't have but at the time it seemed like the right thing to do."

JE: "I prefer to focus on the positive rather than dwell on mistakes and bad decisions."

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be?

MC: "TV and phone. I need my internet to survive."

JE: "Why would anyone ever have to give up these things? Even prisoners have the internet. What have I ever done to deserve that?"

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

MC: "In some bars in Bracknell I'm better known as 'Martina!'"

JE: "I have no secrets. It's all on Facebook."

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MDX



Graeme Irwin (#5) has started the 2012 season in fine form



PIT STOP!

THE ULSTER PREMIER BOYS CALL IN AT DESERTMARTIN WHERE WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH IT'S GRAEME IRWIN WHO GETS GOING...

Words by Stevie Mills Photo by Suttly

With spring at last in the air both Irish and Ulster motocross championships have enjoyed bumper entries and quality racing throughout all classes.

Easter Monday kicked off the Ulster Premier championship at the Cookstown club's Porter's Pit venue just outside the sleepy village of Desertmartin where a pretty over-active track maintenance team worked hard between motos to keep the track as smooth – and as fast – as a road race circuit.

Porter's Pit is undoubtedly a world class venue and the Cookstown club always step up to the mark when it comes to creating a challenging playground for top-flight racing. However, from speaking to a lot of riders that attended round one of the Ulster championship some of the track alterations and obstacles are perhaps a little too challenging – the word 'carnage' was used by one well-respected rider and there were a lot of broken bones.

Conditions were a little windy at times but even sporadic rain showers throughout the day

didn't prevent a large number of spectators making the trip and witnessing a fine display of corner speed versus horsepower in the opener where Samsung Yamaha's Graeme Irwin crossed the line first on his YZ250F followed by JAR Honda pilot Wayne Garrett and TAS Suzuki-supported Gary Gibson who was chased home by reigning Ulster champion Richard Bird with the Crock Star filling out the top five.

That man Irwin stole the show again in race two as Gibson went one better to wrestle second place from Garrett with Bird and Crockard again filling out the top five. The final moto of the day was a close call with Wayne Garrett chasing down but unable to pass a tiring G Man who held on to claim his third win of the day with Gibby taking the final step on the podium. But just why was super-fit Irwin fading in the final moto?

Well, Graeme suffered a massive gash requiring many stitches in his right arm the day before while competing at the British Masters round at Foxhill. After picking himself up from his quali crash he rode back to the team awning,

was carted off to the local hospital for treatment and was back on the line for the first race of the day. "Third overall was okay I guess," says Graeme – this kid has the heart of a lion!

Doon in County Athlone hosted round two of the Retink Graphics-backed Irish championship – a splendid 'old school' circuit with lots of natural terrain and just a hint of modern obstacles to spice it up a little. GC brought his race face with him and took three wins in the MX1 class – even beating the super-fast Irwin in the final moto of the day after the G Man had won the opening two mixed-capacity races.

On international duty Marty Barr lined up against some of the fastest riders on the planet as he made the trip to Holland for the first GP of the 2012 season. In a packed class Marty posted a 22-20 scorecard to claim his first GP point for his new LPE Kawasaki team. Martin is looking good on the green machine and I would expect him to be mounting plenty of podiums in the very near future...

Stevie
dirtbikerider 29



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PROMOTION!

WITH SEEMINGLY EVERY BIG MODERN-DAY CHAMPIONSHIP BEING STEERED BY A PROMOTER, ISN'T IT TIME THE BEC PLAYED CATCH-UP AND MOVED WITH THE TIMES?

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

These days seemingly every championship has a 'promoter' of some description. Be it F1, MotoGP, the Maxxis British MX champs, Enduro World Championship or the Red Bull Pro Nationals – one person or one company is trusted to ensure consistency and quality.

With so many national and international motorsport series now being promoted it makes you wonder if it's possible for a modern day championship to exist without some kind of 'promoter'?

I can remember when the Enduro World Championship got its first ever promoter. I can also remember being sceptical and like many others at the time thinking that it might be a bad thing for the series. But I can also remember what the series was like before someone was brought in to wave their magic wand. It's easy to look back with rose-tinted glasses and reminisce about how good things were – to think positive thoughts about the days when everything was a little less well organised, a little more organic and laidback. But I remember some of the problems the championship faced too, in particular a rider strike at the GP of Portugal.

As far as the EWC series is concerned things aren't the same as they were, which admittedly isn't always a good thing. Where once just about everyone stayed in caravans and motorhomes, nowadays the masses stay in hotels. Events

don't have the same atmosphere as they did. But does that really matter? Surely it's the on-track action that's important.

But credit where credit's due, Alain Blanchard's vision of how the Enduro World Championship needed to be changed and improved was and is pretty much spot on. He can be an awkward bugger to get along with at times but his steely determination to do things the way he sees fit has, by and large, been good for the series. While not all are happy that the series is now less affordable and a little more elitist – and while not everything he does is perfect – there is a definite thread of consistency that runs throughout the championship.

The BEC is one of the rare series that doesn't have any kind of promoter. Once the ACU selects the clubs that will host the rounds of the championship it's over to them with no additional assistance from any person or company. It's the way things used to be for many championships. But is it a way of putting together a championship that's now outdated?

Recently, a lengthy and detailed debate about the BEC series kicked off on Facebook. Following an initial post questioning what type of events should and shouldn't be included in the series, comment after comment was offered regarding many aspects of the series. Some good, some bad. And in a roundabout way it

seemed that many of the issues being discussed were similar to those the EWC faced during its pre-promoter days.

Traditional timecard style enduros are by their very nature complex beasts. And organising such events is anything but easy and becoming harder by the year. As such less and less true enduro events are now being run. The workload on clubs is simply too much for many and as for fresh blood stepping forward to give the series a boost, well, we're not seeing too much of that. The clubs and the BEC series as a whole need a serious helping hand.

In the States the national enduro series now has a promoters group who are effectively turning around the fortunes of what was only a few years ago an all but forgotten championship. The German and European enduro championships now have promoters while the Italian series – regarded as Europe's best domestic series – has long had a promoter for its elite enduro series.

I have no doubt that if a promoter were brought in to assist with the BEC it would be met with much resistance. 'What's the need?' would be the comments of many. But how can an individual or company that wants to see a championship succeed as much as the clubs organising the events be a bad thing?

Maybe we'll never know...

Should the BEC up its game and call in a promoter in the same way the EWC has?



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Supplier: actionretailer.com
Contact: 02031 764851



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Contact: 0870 034 7226

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Fox have pulled out all the stops with their all-new Instinct boot to bring racers the globe over some high-tech footwear that's not only extremely comfortable but protective as well. From the revolutionary five-layer sole up to the hinged ankle enclosure system and beyond the Instinct uses innovative design and materials to get the job done. Look out for a full test on these bad boys real soon!

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Supplier: freestylextreme.com
Contact: 0117 304 9561



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GO-MX have got it going on when it comes to tuning and pimping up 50 and 65cc machines whether they be KTMs, Huskys or even Cobras. The latest – and possibly greatest – products in GO-MX's range are these super-trick personalised ignition covers for KTM 50s and 65s! Basically, GO-MX can laser etch these hard-anodised billet covers with whatever you want – logos, names, numbers or even a picture of your granny!

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KTM 65 from £85.00
Supplier: gomxproducts.com
Contact: 07552 162519



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Dirt bikes need plenty of maintenance to keep 'em running sweet and if you're the kind of guy – or girl – who likes to tinker with your nuts n' bolts on a regular basis you'll have already figured out how important it is to use top tools – like this here Toptul tool set. As well as a three-drawer tool box this kit contains almost everything you'll need to work on your race bike and the few extras you will need can be picked up at bargain prices from vantagetools.co.uk – check it out!

Price: £498.48
Supplier: vantagetools.co.uk
Contact: 0845 260 0120



OGIO 9800 GEAR BAG

The Ogio 9800 has been around for a long time and basically gets radder and radder as time goes on just like K-Dub! Unlike K-Dub though this bag can't fly itself to the races which is a bit of a surprise as it has all the trick stuff you could ever need from a bag crammed into its primo chassis. If you've never owned a 9800 before sort your life out and go get one.

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As worn by Godfrey J Walker these G-React boots from Gaerne are ideal for enduro and motocross riders who like lightweight and slim boots that are still super-protective. Featuring alloy buckles like the top o' the range Gaerne SG series, a uni-pivot ankle support system and rubberised inners to help you grip the bike, these boots offer great value for money!

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TOMMYGLUM?

He's not had the best of starts to his 2012 world championship campaign but we reckon things are going to begin looking up for Tommy Searle once he gets down Mexico way

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FREE LOVE!

OUR FREE RANGE TEST PILOT
ED BRADLEY'S GOTTA WHOLE LOTTA
LOVE FOR THE KTM FREERIDE...

Words by Ed Bradley Photos by Alessio Barbanti



"On this bike it's easier to pretend to be a trials rider than it is to pretend to be a trials rider on an actual trials bike..."



With their Freeride KTM have created a whole new genre of dirtbike





This is one of those messages that I've been waiting for all of my life – do you want a KTM Freeride? My mind races faster than Cairoli out on the track – what do they mean by Freeride? Is it an unpaid ride on a KTM team or have I done something wrong and it's an exasperated 'do you want a free ride?' but the next bit says 'in Morocco'. Now I'm off on a completely different tangent and have moved from a glamorous team ride on the latest sparkling factory bikes to dressing like one of the natives and smuggling drugs or racing mountain mules while I get covered in thick layers of red dust. Then it finally all becomes clear, they're on about testing KTM's new concept bike – the Freeride 350 – in the mountains just outside Marrakech.

We – that's myself and the TMX and Bike magazine test riders – were supposed to get to Morocco in time for a presentation and the

official unveiling of this new hybrid machine. However, we had to make a pit stop in Madrid to put some more duct tape on the plane's passenger door which had been coming undone and wait for the chewing gum that was sealing the hole in the petrol tank to dry!

Arriving three hours late actually worked out brilliantly though because it meant that Joachim Sauer – KTM's production manager of all off-road products – sat down with just the three of us while we ate dinner. Joachim is a passionate, animated guy with a fantastically soft and rhythmic – almost hypnotic – voice. Enthusiastically, he explained about KTM's latest concept bike. "We don't like to follow," he says, "our strategy is to look for open space in the motorcycle industry."

And I really believe that they've found a new space with this bike. The concept originally came from the idea of KTM producing a trials bike around four years ago but they quickly

realised that with a lack of know-how and an already fiercely competitive trials market they were better searching for a different space – perhaps even a different galaxy! So the Freeride idea was born and a target was set – produce a motorcycle that's low in weight, fun to play around on and makes riders of any level feel much more accomplished.

Four years of development later and the refinements were eventually whittled down to the last few modifications – like the addition of Dunlop trials tyres. Originally the plan was to use enduro tyres but these proved to be pants!

"The Dunlop trials tyres just gave a more firm and direct contact with the ground compared to all the other types of tyres that were tested as well as giving huge benefits for comfort and complementing the suspension," Joachim tells us. And for a bit of bling the rims and spokes are black – like that matters!

As you look at the bike from the side it's >>>

The Freeride is capable of being hucked up big steps...



fascinating – an assortment of materials, no visible fuel tank or filler cap and a cumbersome looking radiator shroud. Get on it though and you get a totally different perspective and the only perspective that really matters with this machine.

It must have been so exciting creating this machine with the years of experience that these guys have. Let's look at the frame for example. They knew that this bike should have a low seat height and a fuel tank that's tucked out of the way – this puts the ground within easy reach for riders of all heights making it easier to control and safer to ride. To get a low seat height KTM considered using a hard seat like you'd find on a trials bike but this was totally unacceptable from a comfort point of view! So to be able to create a low seat height and have the tank tucked out of the way while giving the chassis the correct amount of rigidity and support for the suspension an ingenious frame was designed.

The aluminium section provides the backbone strength to withstand the forces from the fully adjustable PDS shock and transfer the loads through the twin-spar frame which is necessary for the fuel tank to sit so low. The rest of the main frame is in keeping with KTM's philosophy and uses steel which is more flexible. The sub-frame is made from strong plastic and cleverly contains all the electrics so they're well protected and tucked away neatly on a bike that utilises every bit of available space.

I already mentioned the bike uses a PDS rear shock to save weight. The shock has



adjustable high and low speed compression as well as rebound adjustment. The forks are only 43mm diameter which provides a little more flex than your stronger 47mm MX legs. This also allows for a greater steering lock which is nearly as much as you'd get on a trials bike and with a steeper steering angle too the bike is very agile and easy to manoeuvre.

During four years of testing the team ended up using the four-stroke 350cc EXC engine as it gives more torque than the 250 and 280 engines to pull you up steep climbs and rock faces – however there are plenty of differences. The crankcases are die-cast saving weight and the valves are steel, improving durability. There is just one single radiator tucked in behind the frame to allow for the wide steering lock and because it is tucked behind the downtube of the frame – close to the engine – KTM have fitted a fan to keep this little dream machine as cool as you like.

It has the all-important electric start too which is very useful when you fall off up a steep Moroccan mountain and you have the kickstart on the inside! Imagine how you would kick over a bike in this situation, not easy.



Starting this bike is ace though – you just hit a button!

Bearing in mind this bike is likely to be ridden through streams and water crossings and the fact that the engineers want this bike to have plenty of pulling power they have come up with two great ideas. The first is to place the air filter in a high position which on this bike is under the seat surrounded by the fuel tank. The small foam filter is trapped inside a clear plastic case that protects the filter from water and reduces air flow giving the motor more torque.

That's the intake taken care of – the second great idea involves the outlet of the engine. The exhaust needs to be long and in a place where it is protected so KTM have gone all old-school and tucked the exhaust header pipe under the engine. It serves many purposes – there's no hot pipe to burn your leg on if you fall over and there's no way of denting it (and believe me I tried) as it sits between the cradle of the frame and has a metal skid plate for extra protection. The long routing provides the torque required and it doesn't stop there.

The header pipe splits into two so that the bike has two short silencers making the bike



...wheelies for fun...



really compact, short and balanced rather than having a huge cannon sticking out one side screaming 'bend me' at the first small fall. Of course two silencers play an environmental role too as they reduce the noise of the bike to a little louder than a fart and each can contain a catalytic converter to make the fart smell nice!

Our riding day was all planned out for us and I was riding with the quicker group. I couldn't wait to get out on this bike and have a good thrash around. When I was younger I would often go out with mates freeriding and we'd do really silly things and generally laugh ourselves to tears – the thought of being able to do this again was getting me all revved up especially because this bike would make me a better rider than I was! I was full of mischief.

We set off down the first set of loose gravel roads stood up on the pegs. Getting up into the higher gears on this moped-sounding machine that has a maximum of 27bhp and all is good. I figured I'd be able to thrash the nuts off this thing and feel really fast.

The bike feels very comfy. The position between the footrests and the handlebars is great and taller riders can add KTM Powerparts bar raisers as well as move the footrests to a position further back from the standard setting. If you want to sit down you can but you'll mostly be riding this machine standing up.

Joachim was leading us when he stopped and told us that we needed to stick >>

...and has a super-nimble and safe feel to it



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So what's Ed's final verdict on the Freeride? "It will make you very happy."

bike test

SPECIFICATIONS

KTM FREERIDE 350

Capacity: 349.7cc

Bore and stroke: 88mm x 57.5 mm

Transmission: Six-speed

Front suspension: WP USD 43mm (250mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP PDS (260mm travel)

Front brake: 240mm Formula disc brake

Rear brake: 210mm Formula disc brake

Wheelbase: 1418mm

Ground clearance: 325mm

Seat height: 895mm

Dry weight: 99.5kg

to the singletrack that we were riding on and where possible keep off the farmer's crops. As soon as we set off one fellow riding buddy shot onto one of the said farmer's crops prompting me to think, 'muppet, were you not listening?' It turns out he had lost control – pffff! – but any feelings of superiority I had lasted for no further than 100 metres before I performed my very own comedy sketch for all the group to see.

I spent at least five minutes just falling over, picking up the bike and then falling over the other side of it, rolling down hills and getting trapped under the bike while sitting on a bush full of spikes – I certainly felt a prick! So scratching my head and thinking 'I must have been really crap before today if I'm supposed to be better after riding this thing' I worked out that you don't ride this bike on trails like a motocrosser. Slow down, use first and second gear and chill out.

After taking some valium I started paying attention to my riding, slowing down and riding the bike like a trials machine. This bike is so easy to balance on, turns on a pinhead and wheelies for fun. All this came as we were riding on fairly flat hills and across open spaces. As the hours went by, the hills got steeper, the rocks got bigger and the tracks became narrower. My confidence was growing fast and before I knew it I was getting egged on to go up rock faces that I

didn't think possible and riding up rocky climbs that I have never, ever encountered before. Within a very short space of time I was thinking I could take on Dougie Lampkin and I realised that on this bike it's easier to pretend to be a trials rider than it is to pretend to be a trials rider on an actual trials bike.

You can set off from a standstill while struggling to keep your balance on a rocky, shaley mountainside with so much control it's unimaginable. Let the clutch out with the bike on really low revs and just set off, get your feet on the pegs and keep climbing with so much traction that the rear wheel barely spins.

After lunch it's time to come back down the mountain, cruising, hopping over stuff and negotiating the sort of tight turns you'd find in trials sections. I found myself knackered after being out for seven hours and yet absolutely gagging to go back out on it in as short a time as possible – I had that much fun.

So who is this bike for? I think it's ideal for first time riders, ladies, older riders, unfit riders and hobby riders who want to trail ride for fun. For me though, I think if you are a motocross rider who has a pit bike, minibike or trials bike because you like to have fun and improve your riding skills then you should sell everything and make way for one of these in your garage. It will make you very happy.





Huck chases after cousin TC
– the Mike Brown Memorial
is a bit of a family affair

FRIENDS REUNITED!

OLD FRIENDS AND NEW FRIENDS MEET UP IN MARSHFIELD FOR THE ANNUAL GOOD FRIDAY MASH-UP THAT'S BETTER KNOWN AS THE MIKE BROWN MEMORIAL MEETING...

Words by **Sutty** Photos by **Nuno Laranjeira**



There's a small pub in the centre of a small town where the moto-banter flows as freely as the booze and half the regulars regularly sport skinned elbows, blistered thumbs or walk with that familiar limp most motocross riders pick up at some point or another. Racers, fans, team owners and mechanics all stand here shoulder to shoulder and enjoy the craic along with non-moto folk who seem to enjoy a good old laugh with the raucous race crowd. It's definitely a cool place to be although if you're not fast you'd best be funny, smart, have an awesome haircut or at the very least be a hooker-crunching man-mountain to fit right in.

The place I'm on about is the Lord Nelson Inn in Marshfield and it's always a great place to be and not just if you love motocross. Serving up a selection of fine wine, ales and spirits – as well as a finger-lickin' fine menu of home-cooked food – the 17th Century hostelry is the home of the Marshfield MXC who meet here fortnightly on Thursdays at eight.

Since its launch in 1981 the club had gone from strength to strength both in number and quality of members and remains the only club within the whole of the AMCA to have had three different

members win the prestigious Superclass championship – Mike Church, Allen Craig and Richard Cuff. But even through all of that success the name of one racer is remembered above all others – that of its founding member Mike Brown.

"Apparently he showed a lot of interest in bikes from quite an early age," says Mike's nephew Tom who's much better known around these parts as TB. "In the early '70s he bought himself a Greeves motorbike and with his two best friends Richard Palmer and Pete Walker went scrambling. He was one of the first guys in the area to take an interest in scrambling and they say he was an awesome rider – smooth, stylish and fast, the total package. He was tragically killed in 1988 when a lorry engine he was working on fell and crushed him to death when the supports holding it up gave way. He left a wife, a young daughter and an unborn son behind."

His death shocked not only his family and the local community but obviously the members of the Marshfield MXC as well. As a mark of respect they started a memorial meeting the very next year.

"Every year since then dad [Mike's brother Alan – owner of Marshfield's very own motocross shop, MotoXtreme] and I have taken entries from riders to compete in the Old Friends," continues TB. "Many different riders have competed over the years

including close friends, friends within the industry, former rivals and even family."

This year I get an invite to compete and that's why at 5:15am on the morning of Good Friday I'm driving away from my seaside retreat in the sunny town of Morecambe and heading towards Rushmead Moto Park – 220 miles more or less directly south. We're used to early starts here at DBR HQ but today is a wee bit different because instead of my camera and media vest sliding around in the back of the regimental Vivaro I've got a pimped RMX450Z and a gallon of the highest octane gas Morrisons can deliver – I sh*t you not. It's been almost two years since I last raced motocross and I'm feeling super-pumped.

Three-and-a-half hours, two strong coffees, a disappointing bacon roll and 60-odd terribly sung along to songs later I arrive at the track. Even though it's some distance away from home Rushmead's a familiar riding ground – we regularly use it for testing, we did that sweet-ass helicopter shoot here back in '06 and years before that I even raced a round of the AMCA 250cc championships here, although that one got called off midway through the second moto while I was having my best ride of the season. Gutted.

But even though I'm used to rolling down



DBR's Deputy Dawger gets ready for his first race in two years

special feature



Mike Brown's nephew TB and his '88 CR125

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*TC and Johnny May shoot
the sh*t while Hot Tub hovers*



*Marshfield pigeons
are gert massive!*



*Suttie pours it on before
the inevitable fade begins*



*George Davis gets
ready to roost*

the gravel road into the track today's drive in is way different because this normally empty place is packed – the Mike Brown Memorial is apparently a must-attend meeting down in the South West. As well as most of the AMCA regulars and a few local stars who are doing the one-day licence thing there's a real motley crew of racers, aces and faces assembled for the Old Friends race. Guys like British SX champ Tom Church and his dad MJ, Mark Hucklebridge, John May, George Davis, Neil Carroll, Rosco, The Darkness, Nigel Meredith and many more. As well as old friends there are new friends too like me and England and Bath rugby star Matt Banahan.

For months most of these guys have been excitedly winding each other up about who's gonna beat who either over a pint in the Nelson or over the shop counter at MotoXtreme. Round here you can forget about discussing who's gonna win the opening round of the world championship this weekend because the focus is on the potential battle between MJ and Big Al with side bets being taken on whether Brown senior will sit down at all through any of the three motos – seriously, this guy plants his ass on the saddle less often than Everts.

The day's about more than just racing and although that's a high priority for everyone involved the bigger picture is all about raising money for the Forever Friends Appeal. The FFA is basically the fundraising charity for Bath's Royal United Hospital and works towards buying state-of-the-art medical equipment and facilities over and above what's provided by the NHS.

If you're thinking that the name Forever Friends Appeal sounds familiar then you're right. Basically it's the charity of choice for Mark and Emma Hucklebridge who have raised over five grand since Mark was diagnosed with cancer back in 2010. Much of Mark's treatment was within the walls of the RUH so it's obvious why the charity's so close to the heart of the locals and motocross folk in general.

The big money-spinners for the charity on the day are the raffle which sees an awesome array of prizes donated, Emma Huck's bouncy castle that sees all proceeds chucked in the pot and Paula Church's used MX kit sale that had quite a few rare bits of MX memorabilia up for grabs – like TC and Huck's race jerseys and a used Scotty Columb jockstrap. While former MJ Church Kawasaki truck driver Mark 'Hot Tub' Hardisty snaps most of those bargains up for his private collection it doesn't really matter too much because it's all extra pennies in the pot which by the end of the day is bulging.

"We made just under £1200 on the raffle," says club treasurer Alan Price. "We've decided to make that up to a donation of £2000 for the Forever Friends Appeal and have also been promised an extra 10 per cent of the amount raised by the club to be donated by both Airbus and Rolls Royce – so that's an extra £400 too."

"From the club's point of view we all worked very hard in planning and advertising the day but we were almost victims of our own success with over 1200 spectators and both the pits and overflow car parks



Bath and England rugby star Matt Banahan



Johnny May spins the wheels on his '88 CR250



Dangerous Dunham yanks a holeshot



Old bikes lining up against modern machines add to the atmosphere



were full. I'm sure you'll agree that Geoff Walker did a fantastic job in preparing the track and deserves recognition for it. I've ridden at Rushmead many times over the years but that had to be the best preparation ever and it wasn't just because we had a bit of rain leading up to the day. It was just a pity I couldn't hang on for more than three laps before my – as yet this year – unfit body was screaming at me to slow down."

That's a feeling I know all too well as my deskbound training programme isn't really hitting the spot when it comes to pumping out motos like a boss – not even 15-minute ones. Still, I'm right in the mix for the first few laps until my tongue gets sucked into the spokes as my weariness takes over.

Up at the front of the pack TC takes the overall win on his '89 CR500 ahead of John May and his slightly more elderly CR250. Huck takes the final podium position on a mix of machinery while the most local of locals TB trades in his old-school CR125 for a brand-new KX250F to take fourth. Through the rest of the pack old scores are settled, new rivalries are created and old and new friendships are cemented – it's basically just one of those kind of days that'll keep the Lord Nelson buzzing until next year...



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JUST THREE ROUNDS IN AND ALREADY THE DEFENDING CHAMP IS THREATENING TO MOTOR OFF INTO THE DISTANCE BUT BEHIND CAIROLI THE BATTLE IS RAGING THROUGH THE PACK...

Words by **Sutty** and **Nuno Laranjeira** Photos by **Sutty, Nuno** and **Sarah Gutierrez**

Uh-oh! We're only three rounds into the 2012 FIM Motocross World Championship and already four-time world champion Tony Cairoli appears to be headed towards title number five as he sits on a 17-point buffer having won 50 per cent of the motos held over the first three rounds.

After being head and shoulders better than the rest in Holland, a so-so 4-3 result in Seville sees him somehow increase his series lead as his closest challengers both have a sh*tter before a reasonable enough 3-1 at his home GP cements his position as

top dog in the class. But what of the others?

Well, let's start at the beginning and round one in Holland. The year's opening moto sees a dogfight for second behind the champ that's intense all moto long. Clement Desalle, Steven Frossard and Gautier Paulin duke it out – a battle finally won by Desalle ahead of super-wild Frossard who runs off the track several times and Paulin whose sand riding has improved massively since his full-time GP debut in 2008. The results for the top three are the same in moto two although this time Paulin can only manage seventh which wreaks havoc with his points total but he still ends the day fourth overall.

Before the points-payers leave the line in Bulgaria on Sunday Frossard has already wrecked his knee and is done for the weekend. With Cairoli having a bad day (is a 4-3 scorecard really so bad?) Christophe Pourcel, who ran a disappointing DNF-9 in Holland, trades 1-2s with Paulin – Pourcel wins the first, Paulin the second. Cairoli joins 'em on the podium.

Third in moto one, Desalle's chances take a dip as he crashes heavily over the finish line double in race two. With severely bent handlebars the MX Panda only recovers to 18th and slips a place in the series standings as Paulin elevates

>>



Woody's knocking on the door of the top 10 and but for a DNF in Italy would be in the hallway already

SHAUN SIMPSON

MX1 RANKING: #11

It's been a long time coming but Shaun Simpson seems to be back in the top 10 which is where he belongs. Okay, his current ranking of 11th makes me look like a liar but for a race two DNF in Fermo the super-speedy Scot would've been higher for sure. In the six motos held so far Woody's run 11-8, 11-9, 8-DNF and with just 22 points separating sixth from 12th there's everything to play for as the series swings to Latin American.

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season so far?

SS: "I think the first heat in Fermo – I finished eighth there. I also finished eighth in the second heat in Valkenswaard but in Fermo I felt that I was really on the pace. I finished just behind Ken and I could see Bobryshev and just in front of him was Desalle. I felt strong and fit, the bike was working well so that must have been the highlight so far."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

SS: "Well, after the British championship at Canada Heights my next favourite was the Italian GP in Fermo."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

SS: "Second heat at Fermo. I was really disappointed because my start was really not okay. I turned too much inside and I hit Paulin so my rear brake was bent around. I rode four or five laps without the rear brake and I could have had a big, big crash so I DNFed."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

SS: "Quite satisfied. Right now I'm 11th in the championship which is not so good because I was lying eighth before Fermo. If I'm in the top 10 every week then that would be good. The main thing will be consistency. In Fermo that didn't happen but I think that I am feeling better – I need to fix my starts and then I think that it's

possible to get sixth, seventh or eighth places every week."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

SS: "Roughly the way I expected really. Everything better than an eighth, ninth or 10th is a bonus really and I've had a few good races like Valkenswaard and the first moto at Fermo so I'm happy."

DBR: Best track?

SS: "Fermo maybe. I normally hate that track but this time was really nice! It was tacky, it was deep, there were lines, the jumps were difficult. We could make or lose time – it was a real motocross track. Normally when it is hard and fast I hate it but this year I enjoyed it."

DBR: Worst track?

SS: "I wouldn't say the worst one but the one that disappointed me most was Sevlievo. It's usually very good there but it was hard and fast and they didn't water it correctly – they didn't rip the soil correctly and it didn't make for a good race."

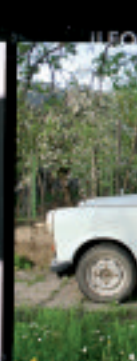
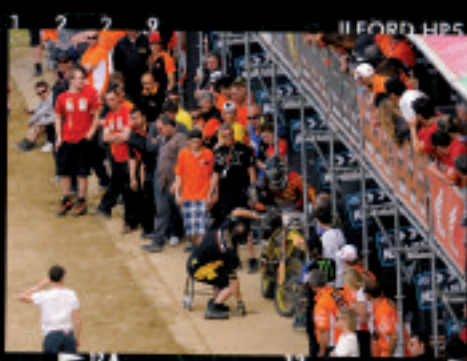
DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

SS: "I think Tanel Leok. If I'm racing then I'm always with Leok – sometimes he's strong at the end of the race and I feel that last year he always passed me at the end but this year I feel that I'm in front a bit. I feel that I'm always seeing him in a race."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

SS: "It's looking good so far! The bike is running well, I'm in a good physical shape, I'm not injured, everything is looking well and I think that I can get better. I believe that the season is really going to start for me from now on."

Tony Cairoli's already a four-time world champ and so far is looking good for title #5 in 2012



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Steve Turner's curly-haired Latvian loony Matiss Karro is banging in some great finishes on the 350 Toomer

The MX Panda cracks a smile – or is it wind?

MATISSKARRO

MX1 RANKING: #15

STR KTM's MX1 rookie Matiss Karro is surprising plenty of people with his strong results on the 350 and aside from a Bulgarian brain fart that cost him an almost guaranteed eighth place finish – and would have no doubt killed a man with less buoyant hair – has proved to be pretty consistent finishing between 10th and 17th in the other five motos.

Currently 15th in the series standings it's not unfeasible that the Latvian could break into the top 10 by the end of the summer which would be an ace result for everyone involved.

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

MK: "It's hard to tell, I think that all the GP rounds were good for me – first year in MX1, bigger bike, new team. I think that the highlight is really to be able to run in the top 10."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

MK: "The second moto in Valkenswaard. I was feeling really fit and was battling with all the big names like Pourcel and Paulin. Also the second race in Bulgaria – I went past Leok and Simpson so those two races were really good."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

MK: "The second race in Bulgaria. That was the most disappointing race for me – when I crashed and lost that eighth place I couldn't believe it."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

MK: "It's been unbelievable. I've finished every round of the British on the podium and proved to myself that I can run top 10 in the GPs which is really good. I just need to stay on two wheels and keep working and if I finish the whole season like this then there

must be something good in the end."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

MK: "I think that it's going loads better than I expected! Before all the races in MX1 with all the different riders I didn't know where I was going to be – I was so nervous and thinking a lot but then on the first race the gate dropped and I realised that I could be up there."

DBR: Best track?

MK: "Valkenswaard I think. I don't like Bulgaria and Fermo but I need to like those tracks to get a good result and that's what I've done in Fermo – I'm starting to learn from my old mistakes."

DBR: Worst track?

MK: "Fermo for me but I turned it around as I didn't have any crashes and I crashed in Valkenswaard and Seville..."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

MK: "I think it's Leok and Stribos. Leok because he's Estonian and that is the next country to me. He's a good friend and we trained a lot together in the past so to be in a race with him is an awesome feeling and if I can finish in front of him then it's even better! Stribos has been second in the world championship and I can run with him at the British."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

MK: "It's hard to tell. To be higher in the results I would have to push really hard and that would mean mistakes being made and my goal is to finish every race, be consistent in every GP and don't do stupid things. If I go crazy I'll crash again and get injured and I don't really want to do that!"



Steven Frossard's championship challenge is effectively over after wrecking his knee in Bulgaria

himself to second. Already the gap between Cairoli and his closest challenger is nine.

The punishing hillside track at Fermo is a technical rider's dream so it's not at all surprising that Pourcel's up for the win once more. An entertaining scrap between himself and Paulin sees the lead change three times in the closing laps of moto one as Paulin capitalises on an unforced Pourcel error to take the lead and then Christophe does the same on the very last lap to take it back. Cairoli's a not too distant third and Desalle fourth after mowing down David Philippaerts mid-race. Frossard tries to race but fails to get far, pretty much ending his hopes of being world champion in 2012.

Cairoli yanks the holey in moto two, Pourcel gates second and Paulin hits the deck in turn one. Gautier fights from last (which is actually only 28th such is the shortfall of starters for the second race) through to sixth which is a cracking effort and could prove critical when every point counts come the end of the season. Cairoli and Pourcel run 1-2 all moto long although with the overall dans le sac if he stays in the runner-up spot there's not too much fight coming from Christophe's corner.

Desalle beats Ken de Dycker to third in the battle of the Belgies while Evgeny Bobryshev muscles his way to fifth as he continues to struggle with niggling injuries.

Martin Barr picks up a point in a wildcard ride in Holland

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Nez gets his first GP points in Bulgaria – there should be many more to come from the Legend of Leyland

NATHAN PARKER

MX1 RANKING: #28

We predicted points for Parker at the start of the year but didn't expect 'em to come as early as round two so it's fair to say the lanky Lancastrian has had a solid start to the season – after his two technical problems at round one at least – and although he's only scored in the one moto so far is always close to sneaking inside the top 20! It's likely Nez will pick up a load more points in South America and hopefully that'll pick up his confidence n'all because when he's firing on all four cylinders this funny fecker's gonna rip!

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

NP: "Probably the second race in Bulgaria. Scoring my first ever points in the world championship – that was a great feeling."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

NP: "So far it was Bulgaria. The track was really flowing and fast with nice jumps. I'm also looking forward to Brazil – that looks nice out there – and Portugal too, it looks awesome."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

NP: "Valkenswaard was pretty disappointing, having two bike problems, two DNFs in the first round and also the second race in Fermo when I crashed."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

NP: "I'm not that happy so far. I just need to get a bit more confidence and start riding like I can ride in practice or at the British so hopefully I'll just build

on what I've already got."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

NP: "A lot worse really. I was hoping to come out and be top 20 every weekend but obviously there are a lot of people trying to do the same. It's not easy at all but that was part of my goal, the other being to score points and I've already done that part so I just need to build it up from there."

DBR: Best track?

NP: "Bulgaria has been my favourite so far."

DBR: Worst track?

NP: "It's a toss up between Fermo and Valkenswaard. I mean, Valkenswaard would have been nice but we had some bad weather so it was really slippery and Fermo was good but they put so much water down – and those deep ruts, not my kind of track..."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

NP: "Alfie! He's going good and I spoke to him and he says that he just looks at me and tries to chase me but I want to concentrate on the group in front with riders like Bonini and Ferris."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

NP: "To stay on, get better starts and hopefully get some confidence. If I get confident in qualifying then I get a better gate pick, better start, everything comes from all the confidence I can get."

CYBER-X!

TAKE YOUR PLACE IN THE FIM MOTOCROSS WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP...

If you've always wanted to be a world championship motocross racer but don't actually have the skills to pay the bills – and I'm not just on about the 10,000 Euro service charge it costs to enter a rider into the FIM series – then you're pretty much gonna be sh*t out of luck, right? Actually not if you're content to be a cyber racer...

Mud is the official game of the FIM Motocross World Championship and is brand-new on the games market across the PS3, XBOX 360 and PC platforms. Developed by industry leaders Milestone, the game features most of the riders in the 2011 MX1 and MX2 world championships as well as a handful more global stars who rock up in MXdN mode – yep, this game includes that awesome team race n'all – so you can play as Tony Cairoli on the factory KTM, Tommy Searle on the Kwacker or even Alfie Smith and his Aprilia, just in case you ever wanted to know what it's like to drive a bus around a motocross circuit.

Just like playing Guitar Hero is not an accurate portrayal of what it's like to get down with a guitar, playing Mud is not an accurate portrayal of what it's like to race motocross – for that you'd have to do what Thrasher Gunge suggested once in TMX back in the '70s and sit on your bike while someone chucks horse sh*t in your face as you rip up £20 notes – but it still offers a pretty decent MX fix. The tracks which are nothing like the real versions are fun to 'ride', the racing is intense and aside from the 'scrub' button which is a little OTT the game experience is generally quite challenging and fun.

There are five modes to enjoy – quick race, championship, MUD World Tour (which is a career path type thing), MXdN and the obligatory FMX Trick Battle mode which I haven't bothered to play yet. In the online mode only quick race and MXdN games are available.

With 14 models of bike to race from eight manufacturers and 84 riders, 12 tracks and six FMX compounds to choose from there's plenty to come back for. The level of racing is variable and after a few attempts I'm yet to win a world championship on the hardest level even though some of you gaming wizards out there will probably go and pop one off in your first attempt. Whatever...

Overall, it's a fun game to play and I love the fact that I can ride as my favourite pro racers from the MX world championships and take out pro racers who I'm not such a big fan of – you know who you are. While the tracks bear absolutely no resemblance to the venues they portray and are a little arcadey at times they're still fun to rip around and even though I'm not the biggest fan of the scrub button I still find using it a blast. So basically what I'm saying is this – if you want a fun motocross game to play this really hits the spot and you should rush out and buy it now. For more details, screenshots and videos visit www.mudthegame.com.



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ALFIE SMITH

MX1 RANKING: #27

Pint-sized teenager Alfie Smith enters his second full season of GPs and this time he's not riding a complete turd of a bike which can only do his confidence some good, right? Well, it has and he's only gone out and scored some points at the third GP of the year – well in son! Like his sparring-partner Nez Parker (they finished the qualification race at Sevlievo 0.073 seconds apart), Alfie's been on the verge of scoring points every race and to finally get on the scoreboard will have to have done his mojo some good...

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

AS: "Scoring my first points this season in the second moto in Fermo. I felt really strong on the Sunday and although I finished 23rd in the first moto I didn't ride that good. In the second race even after having a big crash I still managed to finish 18th and get my first points."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

AS: "I had a really good battle with Nathan Parker in the qualifying race in Bulgaria but the second one in Fermo was good also."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

AS: "That has to be my qualifying in Fermo – it was pretty terrible."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

AS: "So far I haven't had a great start to the season but I started to build things up in Bulgaria and in Fermo things got better and I got my first points so I'm quite happy."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

AS: "We always have high expectations at the start of the season and it's been a bit worse than I was expecting. I think I rode really well in Bulgaria and I was happy with that as well as the team and manager. My target is to score points as much as possible."

DBR: Best track?

AS: "I don't like any of the ones we've been to so far and I preferred Fermo last year – this year was quite physical and difficult to ride."

DBR: Worst track?

AS: "Sevlievo."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

AS: "It has to be my team-mate Herjan Brakke or Nathan Parker because he's a Brit also."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

AS: "I still have a lot to learn but I just need to build my confidence and score some more points – that will help me to do well."



Switching to Yamaha from Aprilia has done Alfie a power of good



Pourcel has started to push and the Frenchman tops the box in Italy



Paulin chases Pourcel in a mini French civil war

MX1 SERIES STANDINGS

1	Antonio Cairoli	Red Bull KTM	133
2	Gautier Paulin	Kawasaki Racing Team	116
3	Christophe Pourcel	CP377 Kawasaki	106
4	Clement Desalle	Rockstar Energy Suzuki	105
5	Ken de Dycker	Red Bull KTM	95
6	Kevin Strijbos	HM Plant KTM UK	76
7	Xavier Boog	Kawasaki Racing Team	72
8	Evgeny Bobryshev	Honda World Motocross	69
9	David Philippaerts	Monster Energy Yamaha	69
10	Tanel Leok	Rockstar Energy Suzuki	62
11	Shaun Simpson	Monster Energy Yamaha	58
15	Matiss Karro	STR KTM	35
26	Gert Krestinov	MVR-D Honda	5
27	Alfie Smith	JK Racing Yamaha	3
28	Nathan Parker	STR KTM	2
31	Martin Barr	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	1

Words of wisdom for Ken de Dycker...



GAME ON!

JEFFREY HERLINGS LEADS THE WAY BUT HE'S RATHER FOOLISHLY JUST MOTIVATED TOMMY SEARLE TO WHOLE NEW LEVELS – THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET WILD IN MX2...

Fermo's first turn is a fecker – slightly downhill and off-camber too, its difficulty and danger is exacerbated by being a 180 degree right-hander which makes using the rear brake more or less impossible once you get into it. But you can't blame the track for what goes down in the second MX2 moto at the third round of the FIM series. In my mind that's entirely down to the human condition known as insecurity and I predict Jeffrey Herlings' ill-conceived and terribly-executed move will massively affect the outcome of the championship.

In pre-season press conferences it's obvious that Tommy Searle's slightly superior speed in anything other than sand is playing heavily on Herlings' mind and that the Dutch kid sees the Englishman as a real threat in the world championship chase. But you'd think that after a cracking start to the season that sees Tommy slip a massive 32 points in arrears after only five motos run, Herlings would feel a little better about stuff and not feel it necessary to go out if his way to mess with the #100 Kawasaki rider but apparently that's

just not the way he rolls...

Seconds into the second moto at the Italian GP Herlings cuts right across the front of Jake Nicholls so he can take Tommy to the fence and then brake check him for good measure n'all. With nowhere to go Tommy tries his best to ride it out but inadvertently starts a chain of events that ends up taking down around a quarter of the field in turn one, himself and Herlings included. Although he probably never expected it to end so spectacularly it's definitely a douche bag move on Herlings' part and even though the Dutchman recovers to win the moto, the whining about being taken out by Tommy in turn one and bullsh*t about a damaged front wheel and defective front brake does nothing to endear him to anyone.

It's a shame really because the season starts so spectacularly for the Dutchman with a double win at Valkenswaard which sees him lap up to sixth in race one and fifth in race two. Tommy and his team-mate Joel Roelants trade 2-3 scorecards to take the final places on the podium giving Herlings an eight-point advantage headed into round two at Sevlievo. >>



Tommy gets dragged off at Fermo by Jeffrey Herlings



Although he's hardly had a dream start to the series Tommy Searle's bang on the pace – the best is yet to come from the speedy Brit

TOMMY SEARLE

MX2 RANKING: #3

Faster, fitter and mentally stronger than he's ever been before, I honestly doubt the Fermo setback is going to negatively affect Tommy's championship attack. Sure, he's 35 points back in the championship chase now but Herlings has definitely messed with the wrong man and I predict we're gonna see a summer of dominance from our main man. We caught up with a less than chipper Tommy as he travelled back from the GP of Italy...

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

TS: "Definitely winning the overall in Bulgaria."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

TS: "The second moto at Fermo! After the crash I was behind the last guy and I pulled through to finish second and nearly caught Herlings even though I could barely see because my goggles were so filled in."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race.

TS: "That has to be the first moto at Fermo. When I got t-boned it did so much damage to

the bike – the radiator and the pipe were smashed and the front disc bent but I still had hopes of coming through to second until the radiator was completely empty and the bike stopped."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

TS: "Not so much after today but we will get back on track as there are still many races to go! I'm just very disappointed that Herlings would make such a cheap move like he did in Fermo but karma is a great thing and how I caught them from so far behind was very pleasing."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

TS: "Definitely worse with the luck I have had."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

TS: "I'm planning on just going out and winning lots of races..."

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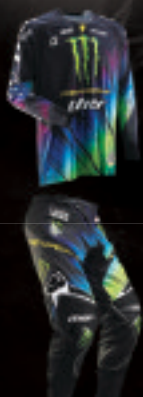
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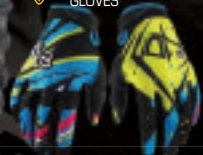


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Jake Nicholls' form has made him a genuine podium contender



Herlings has already built a healthy lead but Searle has got him rattled

A duff front brake sees Searle slip from an early lead to third in Bulgaria's opening gambit although he makes up for that disappointment with a win second time out which also gives him the overall as his 3-1 beats Herlings' 2-2 by a single digit – and you know which single digit I'm thinking of, right? While Roelants wins race one in convincing fashion a moto two dogfight with Max Anstie impedes his progress through the pack and means he's only able to break through to fourth in the race but still take the final podium spot on the day.

While Sevlievo's a sweet day for the green team, moto one in Fermo completely undoes all their hard work. Searle's day – which let's be honest ain't gonna get much better – starts badly enough when a cartwheeling bike ploughs into him on the opening lap and takes him down. Even though he valiantly fights back through the pack a split radiator hose means it's all for nothing when the coolant runs dry and his KX250F clunks to a stop. Roelants meanwhile ejects himself from the GP in a butt-ugly get off in a high-speed right-hander so it's nil points all round for the

Floride Monster Energy Kawasaki Pro Circuit men as Herlings takes his third moto win of the season.

With Herlings and Searle rolling around on the floor in turn one, Monster Energy Yamaha's stand-in Michael Leib takes the bull by the horns and leads the majority of the second moto. Only conditioned for super-intense 12-minute supercross Main Events, the American is always gonna have his work cut out if he's to keep pushing full steam ahead until the end of a 35-minute plus two lap moto and also slowed by a knee injury he can't stop Herlings or Searle from blowing by in the dying moments. Still, third's a great result for someone who struggled to acclimatise to GP racing at all in 2010 or 2011.

So with three GPs in the bag Herlings leads by a moto and five points ahead of team-mate Jeremy van Horebeek. Despite their setbacks Searle and Roelants still sit third and fourth while Max Anstie's currently fifth ahead of Jordi Tixier, Dylan Ferrandis and The Reverend Jake Nicholls who rounds out the top eight. The series swings to South America for two rounds on the trot where Tommy's bound to come out swinging – expect fireworks...

JAKENICHOLLS

MX2 RANKING: #8

Jake Nicholls has surprised many in this year's championship because he's stepped it up again to the point where he's now knocking on the door of a podium. Leading the season-opening quali race in Valkenswaard for five laps was a sign of things to come and except for a disappointing DNF at Fermo when he tweaked his wrist he hasn't finished outside the top 12 so far this season.

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

JN: "Probably the first race at Fermo, I got fourth which is my best single result ever. I felt I was riding really good in the last 10 minutes, I was enjoying myself and felt that the bike was good with the suspension and the tyres."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race?

JN: "I'll probably say the same just because I was enjoying myself and enjoying the track. The qualifying race at Valkenswaard was also good but halfway in I had a little bit of arm pump but I led for about five laps so that was also a good one."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

JN: "Today's second race at Fermo probably because I was in fourth place and feeling good and then I just jumped too far on a small step-down at 10mph. My hand came off the bars, I didn't crash but my throttle hand just completely stretched back and I couldn't hold on. I could barely ride back to the pits. So to DNF in the second race was really frustrating but I'm glad I haven't got anything broken."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

JN: "I'm pleased. After the first race at Fermo I was fifth in the championship so that's really good – I think that I'm eighth now but we're all really close. Obviously to DNF wasn't ideal but I'm really happy, I would think that if I had finished the second race I would be close to a podium and that is where I was hoping to be..."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

JN: "A couple of things have gone a little bit worse but it's all part of the learning curve. The Dutch championship hasn't gone how I wanted but then it's a learning step for me to race on those tracks because they're like Lommel every weekend. That hasn't been ideal but then the GPs until now have been good. The second race in Bulgaria wasn't what I wanted either but I have proved that I have good speed and I've led qualifying races now so I just need to lead the main races and try to get on the podium soon."

DBR: Best track?

JN: "I would say Valkenswaard. I really enjoyed it there because I like the sand. I also enjoyed Fermo but on the second race they put so much water on it that it was like a mud race and I was pissed off because it was dangerous. You could see all the crashes that happened purely due to how much water they put down and they didn't need to do that – the Italian GP is always hardpack and they can't change that."

DBR: Worst track?

JN: "Fermo but because of the watering."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

JN: "Probably van Horebeek just because in the Dutch championship we had some close ones and I feel he's my next rival to catch. Roelants, Tommy and Herlings have been really fast."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

JN: "Just keep working hard and keep getting good starts like I have done and just being there at the end. At Fermo I wasn't there at the end so I wasn't able to get on the podium so hopefully in the coming GPs I can make two good races, finish strong and get two top five finishes and then the podium is the next thing around the corner."



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MAXANSTIE

MX2 RANKING: #5

It's been a strange start to the year for Max Anstie who hasn't seemed particularly super-strong or super-quick but still sits fifth in the standings. It all started badly in Holland where he hit a house brick on lap one and had to charge back through the pack after crashing. So far this year Max has run 11-5, 6-5 and 11-8 and his high series ranking perhaps highlights the inconsistency of the top runners in MX2.

DBR: What's been the highlight of the season for you so far?

MA: "I know that Fermo wasn't the best but we made the best of a bad day and a bad situation – it was just one of those days when nothing seems to go right but I didn't have a zero so that was good. Starting from 32nd probably wasn't the best gate but I managed to end up in the top 10 overall and I'm still fifth in the championship. Bulgaria was nice. I had a couple of solid results in the motos and it's a very nice track over there. In Valkenswaard I would have liked to do a bit better but I had a couple of crashes and it's the sand – also, anything can happen in the first GP!"

DBR: And my question... What was the highlight?

MA: "Oh, highlight – I'll probably say the supercross! Showing up at Anaheim 1 was probably the highlight! That's been the best bit so far, doing that, being in America doing supercross and racing there. I mean, I really enjoy it here with the team and with everyone, it's a nice atmosphere. We keep on building it up, we're getting stronger and stronger, we're getting more improvements on the bike and stuff but, yeah, the highlight was probably doing supercross."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

MA: "Last week in Bulgaria was pretty fun. I really started to feel that I can push up there and that's where we should be – inside the top five is where we want to get to every week. Last week I had a good race with Roelants, I think we made it a bit more interesting instead of following each other..."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

MA: "Definitely today's race here at Fermo!"

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

MA: "You know, I don't come here to get eighth place, I come to the race to win – that's why I do all my preparation and training and everything. It is what it is, I mean, we're not in kindergarten, we're not racing schoolboys, this is the world championship and every little thing counts. I feel strong, I feel like we keep moving forward and I feel that we are going to be stronger and that we are on the right path and it won't be long and we'll be there."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

MA: "I expected that everyone would be as fast as they are, you know, I kind of underestimated it last year a little bit but it's the world championship. The Americans watch it on the TV and it doesn't look that good but the tracks, the travelling and everything, it's so much different from what it is over there..."

"I would have liked to have been right where I left off last year – on the podium – but it's a new team, new bike, new everything. Okay, we might not have the best equipment right now but we're working 100 per cent and in the very near future we're going to get a few more parts from Martin Honda to test and then it's game on! This year is all about building a good base, a solid team around me and feeling good – that's what we got so it's okay!"

DBR: Best track?

MA: "I always like Valkenswaard – that track was rough and that big triple was fun! The hardpack ones are good but Fermo was a bit sketchy and kind of dangerous – so bumpy and rutty. They watered it so much that a guy got stuck on the sighting lap! He couldn't even get up the hill! He was on some kind of Husky and got stuck going up the hill – it was wheel-spinning and he fell backwards down the hill!"

DBR: Worst track?

MA: "I don't know really. A track is a track – it's the same for everyone..."

DBR: Who do you feel has been your biggest rival?

MA: "I had a good battle with Roelants in Bulgaria but I don't really care about anyone else – I want to beat them all. I don't really care who's behind or in front of me, if they're in my way I'm going to move them!"

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

MA: "In the next two weeks we have a lot to do. We have a lot to test, some new parts are arriving which is exactly what we need. I have some new suspension to test and some other stuff. It's just going back to the drawing board. I want to do my work for Mexico and Brazil and I think that it's going to be a different story there. Mexico is going to be weird, I know that and I don't think that is going to suit me. I'm just going to keep working and we can be up there if everything goes right."



After a handful of AMA SX races Max Anstie's back in Europe and running top five



With his two big-hitting team-mates injured Mel Pocock (#119) has really upped his game for Steve Dixon

MELPOCOCK

MX2 RANKING: #15

Only called up to race the GPs after team-mates Zach Osborne and Arnaud Tonus were sidelined with injury, Mel Pocock's been the big surprise of the MX2 class. Stepping up to the team's A-bike which is even quicker than the one he's leading the British championship on, Mel's run of results – 8-12, 17-15 and DNF-11 – don't really testify to the quality of rides he's put in although he's still super-pumped with his performances. One thing not to forget is that Mel's main focus this year is on the Maxxis and European EMX-2 series – he was only doing the first three GPs as a favour to team boss Steve Dixon...

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

MP: "It's got to be moto one in Valkenswaard. I think I sat for seventh for 25 minutes of the race so I proved to myself that I am a top 10 rider so that was amazing. Also taking the red plate in the Maxxis was pretty cool."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

MP: "I would say the last moto here at Fermo, I came here two years ago and I couldn't even do

it – I was struggling with the track, it wasn't my style and this year I ran in the top 10 for nearly the whole race. I proved to myself that I can go over my problems and issues if I can get down to it and really work harder."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

MP: "Also Fermo! The first moto I was so pissed off – I was running sixth and coming into the second corner I was absolutely cleaned out, I damaged the bike and couldn't finish. I haven't had a DNF probably in about two years so I broke my streak with that one."

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

MP: "I'm over the moon with it! I put so much effort in over the winter and I was just hoping and praying that it was going to pay off. I wanted to prove to Steve and to myself that I'm a top 10 GP rider and I did just that – I ran and finished in the top 10 so I'm happy with that."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

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MP: "A lot better! Two years ago I would be like hit-and-miss and now I see myself as a full GP rider in 2013. I would like to be one of the main riders in the team and I don't see why I can't be knocking on the top six – I'll be all right."

DBR: Best track?

MP: "Valkenswaard! I like the sand. I enjoy riding in the sand rather than the dirt."

DBR: Worst track?

MP: "I don't really have a worst track. I get on with most tracks although I'm kind of glad that I'm not going to Loket this year because it's kind of like shale – it's a very unforgiving track."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

MP: "I would say EBB. I have to race against him

in England this year and I raced against him all last year and for some reason we always come out of the start in the GPs and we're racing together. So I guess he's my rival and I think that I'm his rival too. We're good friends off the track so it's all good."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

MP: "Well, I was a bit naïve about doing these GPs as I thought that it would knock my confidence but it's done the opposite – it's built me up! I've come and done my job with Steve in the GPs and we're looking forward to the Euro series where I want to get on the podium. I've to say a huge thanks to Steve Dixon for giving me the opportunity to do these GPs. I wish Zach and Tonus a speedy recovery. Thanks Ade and Ben!"



Bad luck has dogged EBB at every twist and turn so far this season in the GPs



Tommy's team-mate Joel Roelants is running fourth in MX2 after three rounds



Harri Kullas sits one place behind Nicholls in the points



Monster Energy Yamaha fill-in Michael Leib has a storming ride in Italy

ELLIOTTBANKS-BROWNE

MX2 RANKING: N/A

Elliott Banks-Browne's dream of racing the GPs again has been nothing short of a nightmare. First there was the problem of the HM Plant KTM UK team not being recognised as an official MX2 squad which fortunately for EBB – although not his team-mate Sean Mitchell – hasn't been a problem as a starting space has been found for each grand prix although as a non-scorer so far this year this may not always be the case as the series swings back through central Europe shortly. However, bike problems have been Elliott's biggest woe and he's pushed his bike off the track far too many times already this season – at times when inside the top 10. He also suffered a small thumb injury in Fermo and was a non-starter for Sunday's points-paying motos.

DBR: What has been the highlight of the season for you so far?

EBB: "There haven't been a lot – in fact absolutely none in the GPs. The Canada Heights Maxxis was good though and I took my first moto win there and the overall too."

DBR: Describe your best/favourite race...

EBB: "I was having a pretty good race in Bulgaria a couple of weeks ago. I didn't start off too well but came strong at the end. Then my fuel pipe broke and I didn't finish but I felt pretty good there."

DBR: And your worst/most disappointing race...

EBB: "Definitely Bulgaria – I was battling for seventh with three laps to go and the bike just stopped by the pit lane. I couldn't believe it!"

DBR: How satisfied are you with how the season has gone so far?

EBB: "Not very at all. I've not finished a race in the GPs yet at all – I've been pretty unlucky."

DBR: Is it going better or worse than you'd hoped/expected?

EBB: "A lot worse. I don't think anyone could have thought we could have had so much bad luck in one season."

DBR: Who do you feel is your biggest rival?

EBB: "Erm, I'm not sure – maybe Mel Pocock. We've had some good battles and always seem to be near each other on the track recently."

DBR: With the cards you've been dealt so far how do you plan on progressing from here?

EBB: "I'm going to work harder than ever and hope for some better luck. Things are going to change and it will all be good!"

MX2SERIESSTANDINGS

1	Jeffrey Herlings	Red Bull KTM	144
2	Jeremy van Horebeek	Red Bull KTM	114
3	Tommy Searle	Floride Monster Energy Kawasaki	109
4	Joel Roelants	Floride Monster Energy Kawasaki	85
5	Max Anstie	Gariboldi Honda	80
6	Jordi Tixier	Red Bull KTM	78
7	Dylan Ferrandis	Rockstar BUD Racing Kawasaki	73
8	Jake Nicholls	Nestaa JM Racing KTM	69
9	Harri Kullas	Rockstar Energy Suzuki	65
10	Michael Leib	Monster Energy Yamaha	61
15	Mel Pocock	Monster Energy Yamaha	42

PROX

RACING PARTS



By my reckoning there are only three things in life that should be crusty, one of 'em's bread, another's the edge of a pie and the last is that fruitloop freestyle troop – y'know those 'Demons of Dirt' dudes. On the opposite end of the scale things that should never be crusty are eyes, nostril orifices, hippies, hankies, the inside of your – or anybody else's – pants and definitely most definitely not your dirt bike's air filter.

Air filters are there to protect the inside of your engine from all the dirt n' dust we love to ride our bikes in and in the same way that humans can't function well if our airways are clogged up by snot n' stuff then your motor can't breathe properly if your air filter's covered in dirt. It's not just prime performance

we're worried about here though because if you run a poorly prepped, torn, badly fitted or clogged up air filter then you're running the risk of sucking some soil into your engine's innards which is bad news because that sh*t will seriously screw sh*t up.

Unless you've got more money than sense and buy a brand-new pre-oiled filter every time you go riding then you're probably already in the habit of servicing your air filter. Although it's quite messy it's not really a hard task to master. That said, the amount of people who don't do it right is astounding so read on and see if you can learn something. If you can't learn anything from reading this then kudos to you because you're already doing everything you can to protect your bike's inner workings from deadly dirt!



CLEANIN' KITS

Air filter cleaning kits are an absolute godsend to the average dirt bike racer and there are plenty to choose from although they're all pretty much the same. In one of these kits you'll get a sealable cleaning tub with cages to keep your filters out of the sediment and gloop at the bottom, a sealable oiling tub, five litres of cleaner, a litre of filter oil, a tin of contact cleaner, some rubber gloves and if you're lucky a pot of rim grease – basically, everything you need to service your air cleaner! Sweet!



DIRTY BOX?

You'd never put clean junk in a dirty trunk so why would you put a clean air filter in a dirty air box? With the invention of air filter covers – which is a ridiculous name because you have to take the air filter out before you fit them so it's actually just an air intake cover – cleaning your airbox has never been simpler. Simply fit the cover in place of your filter, spray some of your favourite-brand cleaner in there, leave it to work its magic for a moment and then rinse out the dirt and soap suds with a low pressure hose. Boom!

CRUSTY DEMONS OF HURT!

POORLY PREPPED FOAM FILTERS CAN DO LOTS OF DAMAGE BUT DON'T STRESS ABOUT IT BECAUSE DR DIRT'S GOT YOUR BACK WITH THIS AIR CLEANER MASTERCLASS...

Photos by **SUTTY**



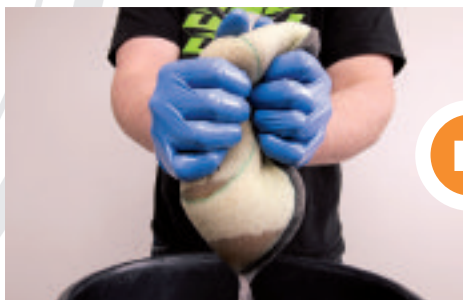
01 Drop your dirty filter into the solvent bucket. Some people use petrol or white spirit to clean off the old oil but I like to use something made for the job – in this case Twin Air's Liquid Dirt Remover. Petrol and other harsh chemicals can cause the glue holding the filter together to break down and initiate premature foam deterioration. I leave the filter to soak for at least five minutes using the special cage that comes in the kit to keep the filter submerged.



02 Remove the filter from the bucket and squeeze out the solvent. You should never wring a foam filter as that's more likely to make it tear. At this point it's worth checking the filter all over for defects, rips or holes and if you find anything wrong chuck the filter away and buy yourself a new one.



03 Although the solvent will have helped loosen most of the dirt a good wash in hot soapy water should get the rest of it out. Wash, rinse and then visually check for any signs of dirt. If it looks dirty then keep washing and rinsing it until it's clean.



04 Okay, just like you squeezed out the solvent from your filter you're now going to do the same with the water. You should only be squeezing out water at this point – if there are any bubbles you didn't rinse properly. Again, check the filter all over for any signs of damage.



05 Your filter's going to be damp at this point so you need to let it air dry. Place it on a piece of paper towel or even better hang it up to dry and go make yourself a brew – or two. Never attempt to oil a damp filter because the oil will trap the moisture inside. Wet filters suck dirt so make sure it's sufficiently dry before you even think about moving on to the next step.



06 Now soak the filter in filter oil. Some people use a plastic bag for this step but I prefer to use a sealable tub – less oil is wasted this way as you can squeeze any excess back into the tub. Make sure every part of the filter is saturated in oil.



07 Squeeze and massage out the excess filter oil. The filter needs to be evenly covered so it should be uniform in colour with no light or dark patches. If you have light patches that means there's not enough oil and dark patches mean too much oil. If you're using fresh filter oil you should be able to massage the filter until the oil is evenly spread on both the outside and inside.



08 At this point I like to tightly wrap the outside of the filter in paper towel and leave it to sit for 24 hours on the workbench. A freshly oiled filter should never be used straight away as the thinning agent in the oil needs time to evaporate. If it hasn't evaporated your bike will run rich.



09 Remove the filter from the paper towel, place it on the cage and then run a bead of grease around the seal before flattening it with your finger. Refit the filter in the bike checking it's sealed properly all the way around then pop your seat back on or close your filter flap and go get it dirty again. Enjoy!

SACRE BLEU!

**SHERCO RELEASE A PAIR OF PURE-BRED WOODS WEAPONS
THAT THREATEN TO LEAVE OUR MOTOR-MOUTH ENDURO
TESTER LOST FOR WORDS...**

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by Suttty

It's a full eight years since French manufacturer Sherco entered the enduro market and the rock-hopping trials manufacturer went for it in a big way with a fuel-injected 450. The innovation shown was refreshing but the bike was like a stealth machine and stayed under the radar so the bigger players in the market didn't really feel the effect of the new kid on the block.

Fast forward a few years and for 2012 Sherco are on top of their game and making solid, pure enduro bikes. This firm are not interested in taking over the world of motocross. They are running an enduro programme with a view to making the best bikes available for all rider levels and aspects of the sport – we're talking woods, bogs, rocks, roots and general off-road nastiness.

Changes for this year include a new semi-perimeter style, chrome moly

frame that has been severely ragged and rated by their extensive test team which includes Fabien Planet who is on top of his game in the world of enduro. Other great changes include the rerouting of the fuel-injection wiring and connectors to make them fully waterproof. This may sound trivial but with the fuel-injection system there's simply no place for damp connections. The bike will not run and the day will be done. This attention to detail comes from an in-depth process of development driven by a passion to win.

The WP suspension units are another great system to work with the new frames on the 250 and 300 and the swingarm looks quite familiar to those employed by another WP-using manufacturer. If it works, use it I say! The brakes are now from Brembo which are without question the leaders for feel and braking power on the market at the moment.

>>



*The 250 is a great bike
but in certain situations
the chassis feels a little
on the stiff side*

SHERCO

Motorcycles

300i

SEI 2012

WP fork

Brembo brakes

The 48 mm diameter fork that is fitted to the R series was developed by WP in conjunction with the Sherco factory. It provides outstanding control on large impacts while maintaining a great level of comfort on small bumps.

The renowned Brembo brand makes its appearance on the 2012 Sherco. This has led to an improvement in the feeling of the clutch and brake systems and provides gains in braking power and gives them a more progressive feel.

Motor-in depth revisions

The 250 and 300 motors have been revised for the 2012 models. They have a new cylinder head that improves the power at all speeds. The ignition mapping has been revised to complement the engine updates.

Optimized injection

Sherco has used its experience as a pioneer in the use of fuel injection on enduro bikes. The routing of the wiring harnesses and the location of the fuel injection connectors (new and fully sealed) were very carefully thought out when designing the new frame.



	250 i / iR	300 i / iR
Engine	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology	4 stroke DOHC, 4 valve Sherco technology
Engine Size	250 cc	290.05 cc
Bore x Stroke	78 x 52,2 mm	84 x 52,25 mm
Fuel System	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection	Magnetti Marelli digital electronic fuel injection
Cooling	Liquid system with forced circulation	Liquid system with forced circulation
Starting	Unique electric starting system	Unique electric starting system
Battery	12 V / 7Ah	12 V / 7Ah
Exhaust	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminium muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.	Stainless steel header pipe, aluminum muffler with catalytic converter meets Euro 3 stds.
Transmission	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive	6 speed sequential gearbox, primary gear drive chain secondary drive
Clutch	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath	Hydraulic, multidisc in oil bath
Ignition	Ducati alternator 150 W	Ducati alternator 150 W
Chassis	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum	Half perimeter frame Chrome-Molybdenum
Fuel Tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank	8.5 Litre fuel tank
Brakes	Hydraulically activated Brembo i: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) iR: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)	Hydraulically activated Brembo i: Ø 270 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear) iR: Ø 260 mm (front) Ø 220 mm (rear)
Front suspension	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel i: SACHS «OR» telescopic fork iR: WP telescopic fork	Ø48 mm tubes rebound and compression adjustable 300 mm of travel i: SACHS «OR» telescopic fork iR: WP telescopic fork
Rear suspension	WP progressive, multiajustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel	WP progressive, multiajustable rear shock utilizing a linkage and rod system 320 mm of travel
Front wheel	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 1.60 x 21" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Rear wheel	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type	Excel 2.15 x 18" aluminium rim, steel spokes and Michelin Enduro Competition tube type
Weight	102 kg (225 lbs.)	102 kg (225 lbs.)
Wheelbase	1.480 mm (58.27 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Ground clearance	350 mm (13.78 in)	1.480 mm (58.27 in)
Seat height	870 mm (34.25 in)	870 mm (34.25 in)

£6750

£6850



Semi-perimeter frame

Sherco frames are famous for their excellent adaptation to the practice of enduro racing in all conditions. There is a big revolution in 2012, the enduro models are receiving a totally new, semi-perimeter frame made from chrome molybdenum. This new design was chosen after extensive testing in the enduro environment and proven to provide excellent performance in this discipline. The shape and thickness of the various frame components varies depending upon the constraints and loads applied to them. This results in

high lateral stiffness (for more precise handling, better control in the corners) without increasing the longitudinal stiffness (providing excellent comfort and a neutral feeling in all circumstances). This new configuration allows a clearer focus on the rest of the components, the swing arm, the exhaust and the fuel tank have been redesigned to enhance the total feeling of the bike. The 2012 Sherco becomes sharper and more accurate, while keeping the tracking and feel of the front end that has made its reputation.



SHERCO

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The motor has also come in for the treatment with a new cylinderhead to improve power in all areas. This coupled with new ignition mapping compliments the mechanical changes to provide the gas to the motor where and when it's needed most. Another big upgrade for the 300 is the use of an all-new F1-inspired double bridge forging piston which is lighter and stronger. This unit allows for greater motor life in extreme conditions while allowing the rev range to reach up to 13,500rpm. The 300 also receives an upgraded clutch to handle the extra power and the slow speed power curve is aimed at making the bike super-smooth at super-low speeds in the most extreme of conditions.

With all these massive developments we hit the woods in sunny Yorkshire to see just how good the blue machines from Nimes could be...

250iR

I have to say, when I set eyes on the new bikes for the first time on the day I was very impressed with the look and styling. The bikes are turned out and fastened together very well. The lines flow and there are no odd shapes or protruding features to snag the rider on the 250 or 300.

The seating position is friendly to what would be all sizes of human. I didn't feel cramped on the bike and I'd only change the handlebars for a more personalised feel as they felt quite straight and narrow. The peg-to-seat-to-bar position felt comfortable and fairly neutral.

The bike was fired up and it was off into Braybrook woods for some tree smashing – smashing! The balanced feel to the bike was evident straight away and the steering was precise and made confidence grow immediately.

The ground was loamy with some good deep turns to test the motor. The bike felt light and very manoeuvrable from the off and for the next couple of laps around the loop this feeling grew. There is however a trade off with this amount of precise handling and that is a slightly stiff feeling from the chassis. This feeling was from the new

frame and in most situations it is awesome to have that bit of stiffness to drive through the turns and get the hammer down. The only slight negative with this feeling is when you encounter some mid-level slow tech turns on difficult terrain as the bike will push through slightly. This stuff is minor but it is why we test bikes at DBR, to give an honest and informed view.

The little 250 liked to be revved and trust me I revved it. This motor has to be ridden hard to get the best out of it. The ground is covered quickly on the bike but you have to work it hard as with all 250 four-stroke enduro bikes.

All-in-all the 250 Sherco delivered the package I expected.

300iR

It's difficult for me to contain my excitement when I get to ride a completely stock bike that delivers a knockout blow which I did not expect. And the Sherco 300 basically blew me away. What can I say?

I rode the 250 first on the test which met my expectations from the package so stepping onto the 300 I thought things would be pretty much the same with a few extra ponies to pull my largeness around the loamy terrain. But I couldn't have been more surprised.



The 300's few extra ponies have a positive effect on its handling



The fuel pump's now mounted high up



250iR

Capacity: 250cc
Bore and stroke: 78mm x 52.2mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres
Front suspension: Sachs 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP (320mm travel)
Front brake: 270mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 870mm
Wheelbase: 1480mm
Ground clearance: 350mm
Dry weight: 102kg
Price: £6750



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From the first 100 metres of track my smile grew and that was pretty much it for the next hour-and-a-half. Suttly had to basically drag me off the bike. I have been testing for DBR for nearly 10 years now and I have never ridden two bikes from the same manufacturer which are so different. Don't get me wrong, the 250 did everything well but the Sherco 300 was the hairy boys!

This bike is a blend of strong, easy power from zero to hero on the rev range. The bike makes such great power in every part of the range that the chassis is 100 per cent tamed and is made to work exactly as it is designed. The extra smoothness and grunt from the motor

allows you to build and carry speed in the areas where the chassis stiffness affects the lower power of the 250. The stiffness would raise its head if you were to dilly dally around but from my point of view in the saddle this bike was able to deal with everything in the easiest of ways. What more can anyone ask from a bike...

A comfortable ride and ample power delivered in a smooth way with turning and precision to hit every line in every situation. This bike seems to tackle the terrain on its own and will improve any rider's technique.

Congratulations to the Sherco crew – the 300iR almost had me lost for words. What a bike!



The 300 is so good it leaves Walker almost lost for words – trust us, that's rare...



300iR

Capacity: 290cc
Bore and stroke: 84mm x 52.25mm
Transmission: Six-speed
Fuel tank capacity: 8.5 litres
Front suspension: Sachs 48mm (300mm travel)
Rear suspension: WP (320mm travel)
Front brake: 270mm disc
Rear brake: 220mm disc
Seat height: 870mm
Wheelbase: 1480mm
Ground clearance: 350mm
Dry weight: 102kg
Price: £6850

THE ITALIAN NAMUR!

TWISTING AND TURNING UP, DOWN AND THROUGH THE PARCO DELLE ACQUE MINERALI, A THREE-MILE TRACK AT IMOLA WAS THE VENUE FOR ITALY'S FIRST TASTE OF MODERN-DAY MOTOCROSS...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

I recently stayed at the Hotel Donatello in Imola when covering a WSB round for Eurosport where the fabled 'Autodromo de Enzo e Dino Ferrari' has been a motor racing circuit for almost 60 years – although the ancient walled city of Imola always boasted a love for speed and in Roman times its amphitheatre held races for bigas, or two-horsed chariots!

The track layout was drawn up in the late 1940s when a programme of public works was instigated to help a depressed post-war economy. Imola derives its name from the Latin word 'imulae' – which means 'down there' – and five local enthusiasts decided to create a circuit in the hills right across the River Santerno from the town. The foundation stone was laid in March 1950 but it was another three years before the inaugural race for the Italian motorcycle championships.

By the 1980s it was the home of the San Marino Formula One car grand prix and, briefly, motorcycle grands prix. In 1994 Ayrton Senna perished there and WSB arrived at the spectacular, swooping circuit in 2001. The track encloses the 'Parco delle Acque Minerali', a park that rose up around mineral water springs which were discovered in 1830.

Formed round a circular hill called 'Mount Castellaccio' this steep, beautifully wooded, tranquil (most of the time!) area opened in 1871 and copied the new 'English' model that originated in 1847 with the world's first ever public park in Birkenhead on Merseyside (which inspired Central Park, New York)!

When you visit Italy you cannot escape motorsport – it runs through the blood of the country and Ferrari and Ducati are names that resonate with everyone. So it came as no surprise to find some fine motorsport books for sale in a glass cabinet in the foyer of the Hotel Donatello. What did startle me was a huge, imposing hardback entitled 'Imola Mondiale – Le Radici del Motocross Italiano' ('The Origins of Italian motocross').

Now I knew that early Italian motocross GPs had been held here but what I never realised was the sheer scale of the enterprise. The original three-mile motocross track actually ran up, down and through the Parco delle Acque

Minerali, forded the stream that tumbled through the park and twice leapt across the (then public) Tarmac road at the bottom to run along the pebbly bed of the Santerno river. It pre-dated the road circuit, hosting its first race – a full blooded international – in 1948 and was truly an Italian Namur!

The founders of this epic, led by Dr Francesco 'Checco' Costa, decided to base their new venture on the Anglo Saxon platform of 'trials and scrambles'. So May 23 represented a milestone in the annals of Italian motorcycle sport – the debut of Northern European 'motocross', replacing the traditional Italian cross-country 'corfa campestre'. It proved such a success that a second promotion ran in October and the following year, on June 12, the first 'Gran Premio d'Italia' for machines of 125-500cc (!) was won by Englishman Harold Lines on an Ariel. Another Brit, Bill Nicholson (BSA), won in 1950 and in 1952 the Italian Grand Prix became a round of the newly introduced European championship.

Mighty Belgian Auguste Mingels claimed a hat-trick of wins through to 1954 but Brits Phil Nex, Les Archer and Brian Stonebridge all claimed podium finishes. The latter, on a BSA, also finished second to the immaculate Swede Sten Lundin in 1955. The brand new 'Campionato del Mondo' – the first year of a world MX championship in 1957 – brought another Swedish victory, for Bill Nilsson's AJS, with brothers-in-law Jeff Smith and Johnny Draper second and third.

Lundin, riding a Monark, flew to a dazzling hat-trick from 1958 to 1960 with brothers Derek and Don Rickman on their Triumph Metisses occupying rostrum slots. "Imola remains, with Namur and Hawkstone Park, one of the temples of motocross of the Golden Era," says Sten. "I remember perfectly every jump, the fords, the slopes, the curves and those downhill!"

In fact Swedes dominated the second decade of Imola's off-road adventure. Nilsson was back in the winner's circle in 1961 before Rolf Tibblin (Husqvarna) took over for two years with John Lampkin's dad Arthur finishing third in 1963. Finally, for the first time, the 1964 500 GP moved away to Avigliana up in the north west corner of Italy where Jeff Smith won on the way to his first world title. >>



DAVID BAILEY DOMINATES
MX DES, MACKWORTH,
1986



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer,
magazine art director, photographer and part-time art
college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism.
Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words.
He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICK is the godfather (our words, not his) of
British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to
Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan
Burnick, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble'
and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Bearer Titulaire		★ Wife Femme	
Occupation Profession	GRAPHIC DESIGNER		
Place of birth Lieu de naissance	BILKIN (CHAM)		
Date of birth Date de naissance	9/3/47		
Country of Residence Pays de Résidence	ENGLAND		
Height	5' 11" in		

Visual signature of bearer
Signature du titulaire

Visual signature of wife
Signature de la femme

Jack Burnick

(6337315)



It's **just** dirt.
Make it **yours...**

Good times. Powered by

SHOT
RACE GEAR

3X WINNERS OF ITALIAN
500 GPs AT IMOLA,
STEN LUNDIN & HIS
MIGHTY MONARK IN THE
VETS' RACE AT MAGGIORA, 1989



BLASTA FROM THE PASTA!

MAGGIORA SET FOR GP RETURN

The most iconic name in the history of Italian motocross is Maggiora. Set in a majestic valley beneath the mediaeval hilltop village of the same name (population 1,794!), it lies 60 miles north east of Turin in the Alpine Italian province of Piedmont.

After hosting its only 500 GP in 1966, Maggiora promoted 250 GPs in 1982, 1990, 1995 and, finally, 1999. But it is most famously remembered for its 1986 MX des Nations and that dominant American squad of Ricky Johnson, David Bailey and Johnny O'Mara. It had, though, already run a 250cc Trophée des Nations in 1980 which was also my first trip to Italy. Belgium won – for the 10th successive time – but a race victory for mercurial local hotshot Maurizio Dolce (Maico) set the sun-scorched valley ablaze!

Amazing news is that two young men are working hard to organise an MXGP back at this legendary venue in 2013. Paolo Schneider and Stefano Avandero, friends and enthusiasts from nearby Biella, have signed a provisional agreement with Youthstream to hold the Italian GP in Maggiora from next year and the MX des again in 2016 – on the 30th anniversary of that 1986 epic.

The entrepreneurial spirit of Checco Costa and his associates in Imola lives on!

THE UNIQUE GOLDEN
ATMOSPHERE OF
MAGGIORA! PATRICK FURY
LEADS JEAN-PAUL MINNELS
IN THE 1980 TROPHÉE DES
NATIONS



MAGGIORA – THE VILLAGE
+ THE TRACK ON
RACE DAY 1986



ITALIAN 250 G.P.
MAGGIORA, 1990 –
FULL ON ITALIAN MX
INSPIRED BY IMOLA!

A 250 world championship series had started up in 1962. The first two Italian rounds, won by Torsten Hallman's Husqvarna, were held on a superb hillside circuit at Gallarate, north west of Milan, which you can still see when flying into the adjacent Malpensa airport.

The 250s arrived at Imola in 1964. The Rickman brothers on Bultaco-engined Metisses and former European champion Dave Bickers (Greeves) couldn't prevent a continental whitewash as Hallman won again, beating Russian Igor Grigoriev and tearaway Belgian teenager Joel Robert on CZs.

But a growing resistance to this annual contamination of their park meant some Imolese were fighting to halt any further racing activities. The MXGP was no longer seen as the essential lifeline to the local economy that it was in the immediate post-war years and on July 11 1965 Imola ran its last ever race, the 17th Gran Premio d'Italia, in which Rolf Tibblin secured his

hat-trick ahead of Lundin (Matchless Metisse) and Vic Eastwood (BSA).

They still twice crossed the road racing Tarmac at Curva Tamburello (where Senna would crash 29 years later), ran alongside – rather than through! – the Santerno river, forded the Rio delle Acque Minerali stream and thrust thrillingly up and down Mount Castellaccio on their two-mile lap. You can still walk traces of the track today but it was the last time the woodlands would echo to the roar of motocross machines.

Across Italy other towns and villages had followed Imola's lead – MX GPs were on the march! Maggiora welcomed the 500s in 1966 while the 250s headed off to Cingoli. Many other famous names like Cuneo, Castiglione del Lago, Ferme, Faenza, Monteverchi and Mantova would join the fray during the ensuing three decades. But they all owed their success to Dr Costa and his devoted colleagues at the Moto Club Imola.

They truly had laid the foundations of Italian motocross...

DIRTY DESIRES!

HE'S RIDING HIGH AS BIG RED'S MAIN MAN IN WORLD SUPERBIKES BUT JONATHAN REA'S FIRST LOVE IS MOTOCROSS AND HE STILL FUELS THE FLAMES OF THIS PASSION THROUGH HIS JAR HONDA TEAM...

Words by Paul Lindsay

Everyone remembers their first love. And while the majority of us will spare a wistful smile thinking of the short skirt and youthful figure adorning our high school sweetheart, for Jonathan Rea his first love was a PW50!

That's the indelible mark the baby Yam left on the current Honda World Superbike star during his formative years and despite his change of discipline to Tarmac at the tender age of 16 and the financial rewards he has received on the way to becoming one of the world's best his first love remains motocross.

At this point I should add that's he's very much a red-blooded male – as I'm sure his Australian fiancée Tatia will confirm – but mention berms, whoops and tabletops and the 25-year-old Ulsterman's eyes light up like a pinball machine.

JR is a self-confessed adrenalin junkie and while he is happier than ever in his current employment as Honda's number one rider in WSB with the Dutch-based Ten Kate team, his love of dirt and sand was born at an early age and is now fed and fuelled by JAR Honda – his very own Ulster and Irish MX team.

In 2012 JAR Honda will run former Ulster and Irish champion Wayne Garrett alongside Michael McCommond in MX1 and MX2 and it was on the McCommond family farm in County Antrim back in the early '90s where a five-year-old JR grabbed his first handful of throttle.

"Michael's bigger brother Philip – who is still a close friend – and I rode PW50s on their family farm and even at that early age it was apparent that I was quite good at this old motocross lark.

The following year I started racing with Martin Barr as he was in my age category and we split the Ulster and Irish championships.

"I'm not sure which one I won or lost but I do remember spending the whole afternoon crying in the back of the van about the one I didn't win and my dad had to tell me to pull myself together. We were all only six years old and the others just seemed to be enjoying it but even back then it was all about winning for me."

Rea went on to compete successfully at youth level, winning a 60cc British championship in his debut season and despite showing obvious talent for the off-road discipline he soon reached a crossroads in his fledgling career. Little did he know it at the time but it would spell a premature end to his love affair with competitive motocross before he'd even reached the adult ranks.

"I did the ACU British youth championship on a 60cc bike in 1997. My dad was on the ball having the bike tuned by Robert Fleck at Queens University in Belfast but we found that the standard KX pipe was the best and ran it at the first round. Everyone else was on aftermarket pipes but when I won two races on the Saturday they all seemed to change back to standard exhausts for the Sunday.

"I also remember the long journeys in a Fiat Ducato van with my dad driving all night to get there. I won that 60cc championship at youth level but when we went to the 125cc class I was competitive but I never won a championship and what some people maybe don't know is I actually quit motocross before I got to the adult ranks. It was costing my dad too much time away from the business and there didn't seem to >>

profile

Away from the serious business of WSB, Jonathan Rea gets his kicks from running the JAR Honda MX team



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be any opportunities for me to get in with a team. "It was at that time Red Bull ran a competition in Motor Cycle News to add a third rider to their Red Bull Rookies 125cc British championship Tarmac programme. I kind of entered thinking if I got through I could race a year in 125 British championship and also do motocross."

So full of youthful exuberance, in 2003 JR made his Tarmac debut but at the end of the season, with the MX bug still running through his veins, he entered Matt Bates' SX event at Belfast's Odyssey Arena. It was packed to the rafters in those days with the 7,000-strong crowd looking to catch a glimpse of Gordon Crockard, Ireland's greatest ever motocross exponent.

"Darren Wilson organised me a bike for the supercross in Belfast and I split wins with Shaun Simpson on the Friday and Saturday night. At that stage the road racing bug had bit me though as I'd achieved a podium in my first season in British championship. I'd also started a relationship with Honda and Red Bull and since then I've never looked back."

This will be Rea's 10th season competing on Tarmac and having won races at British and world level I was shocked to hear him openly admit that his youthful supercross experience back in '03 still ranks high on his 'best ever' list of achievements.

"Nothing comes close to that feeling. I think the only thing that I can compare it to is walking out of the garage on the morning of my World Supersport race at Brands Hatch in '08 – my debut season. In supercross the crowd is so close and they are going mad, especially in Belfast. It really is some feeling and I've talked to Wayne Garrett about it and he says he feels the same. I actually raced against Wayne back then and you get nervous energy thinking that every pair of eyes in the arena is on you."

JR's final SX appearance was in Dublin some years later. He'd arrived with no intention of racing but true to form Crockard, a fellow Red Bull athlete at the time, offered to lend Jonathan not only a bike but also some riding gear to compete at the 11th hour. Full of self-belief and up for the challenge, JR immediately got kitted out but despite the heartfelt gesture he wiped Crockard out in the first heat, putting him off the track and demonstrating his ruthless competitive streak. Thankfully both men were able to laugh it off afterwards.

Ever since I first interviewed JR over a decade ago he has remained realistic in his approach, never forgetting his roots or the people who helped him along the way. And it's clear he gets a deep sense of satisfaction knowing he's putting something back into the sport he loves. >>



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THE BUZZ!

HOW JR GETS HIS FILTH FIX...

With his own career making rapid progress on the Tarmac scene, Jonathan still used motocross as a means of keeping fit and fuelling his passion but a number of crashes and a few injuries that had to be glossed over to the press – and to his employers – have made him more aware of the consequences in recent years.

"I have a bike in the Isle of Man but I just don't want to risk injury anymore. I do ride at times with David Knight but I've got to be careful and I stay away from hardpack tracks as crashing on them is like hitting Tarmac. Sand tracks are harder to get onto these days but I prefer to ride them as at least there's a bit of a cushion when you crash."

"My buzz now is watching the boys in the JAR Honda Team racing and Ronald [his WSB team boss] is the same. His kids are around six and seven and neither of us could quite put into words why it is so good standing at the side of a motocross track."

"I think it puts it into perspective. When you first start racing that's the most fun but when you start to climb up the ladder it's easy to lose sight of the fun part. It gives me a sense of achievement, knowing where I've come from in racing and I suppose I'm lucky that I have a pound or two to help others in racing and give them the feel-good factor."

"And if I'm honest I also get a buzz when I hear trackside commentators like Roy Neill who called out at Desertmartin on Easter Monday 'Michael McCammond on the Jonathan Rea-sponsored JAR Honda'. I'm just one of the boys in the team though. We all have fun together and hopefully they think of me as a friend."



© Sully

JR first threw his leg over a bike on the farm owned by current JAR Honda team rider Michael McCammond's family



© Geoff Campbell

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THE BEST IN THE EYES OF A CHAMPION

ANTONIO CAIROLI
MX1 GP WORLD CHAMPION

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Wayne Garrett has brought a shedload of experience to the team for 2012



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"The first rider I helped was Thomas Fenwick, a Scottish lad in 2008. Dennis Amor [brother of retired road racer Keith] ran the team and I gathered bits of pieces of support from sponsors. He actually rode a spare Honda I had in my garage. That team was called JAR Honda by Site Sealants.

"At the end of '09 I did the same with South African kid David Goosen and we ran him in 2010. I was bringing in sponsors and manipulating my relationship with suppliers but because of my racing schedule Dennis again ran the team. We were just an entry level team but we were helping to fuel the dreams of these kids. Goose moved on to Rockstar KTM and he's now with LPE Kawasaki but I take pleasure in knowing I gave him a foot-up in his career. He also did well in the SX for us. It was a good time."

In a results-driven business and with a

highly-motivated team owner supplying the folding stuff to fund it, Jonathan admits he was at a crossroads yet again. He still had the burning desire to continue with his motocross team but wasn't sure what direction to take in 2011. After much soul searching he eventually decided to go full circle and back to his roots, supporting Michael McCammond whose family farm he used to springboard his own career some 19 years before.

"Things on the ground weren't up to scratch and nor were the results. I'd known Michael for years and knew he was a good kid and was also a family friend. On top of that Honda were not being that well represented back home in Ireland with no real support from the dealer there so my way of showcasing the CRF range was to put Michael on a 450 in the Irish and 250 in the Ulster championships.

"Michael got injured halfway through the year

and then I got talking to Wayne Garrett. He was upside-down with a leg injury and asked me advice on where to get on a Honda. I'd agreed the same deal with Michael for this season but because the rules had changed in Ireland and you had to pick one class or the other it was a great way to have Wayne in there as well. I still believe he's one of the best riders in Ireland."

JR's brother Richard is now looking after parts and logistics for the team with Wayne bringing long-term spannerman Kenny Smyth into the fold. Davy Mulligan, a close associate of Gordon Crockard, is assisting Michael. So is this the blueprint for future success for JAR Honda?

"It's just grassroots stuff. Most of it I fund personally and I suppose the next step is to look for some outside funding. I've got the infrastructure in place now. I suppose we can do what are doing now for around £15K-a-year running costs. Go to British and what would that increase to? £60K? Probably more... Our guys don't get paid but it costs them very little to go racing plus we get good support from Honda and Michelin and so many other product partners.

"I've got the experience how to do things correctly – create a clean image and give sponsors some return. It can be a pain in the ass at times but then some days it can be serious fun like at Easter when Wayne posted his first win and Michael was up there battling with a British championship team. That's all we're after – a bit of enjoyment. Success is a bonus."



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*It's taken five years but
Rodrig Thain is finally
starting to assert himself
in the EWC*

HOT ROD!

YET ANOTHER FRENCHMAN WHO'S MADE A SUCCESSFUL SWITCH FROM MOTOCROSS TO ENDUROS, RODRIG THAIN SPENT SIX YEARS RACING AMA SX BEFORE HEEDING THE CALL OF THE EWC...

Words and photos by Future 7 Media Ltd



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Rodrig Thain is a rider well travelled. From top teenage French motocrosser to Bercy SX winner and US supercross racer, it's on the Enduro World Championship tour where he now earns his living.

Competing in the Enduro 1 class for the Italian HM Honda team, Rodrig's rise up the enduro ranks hasn't been – by his own admission – as rapid or successful as that of countrymen Meo, Aubert or Renet's, France's better-known motocross-to-enduro exports. But after five years of EWC competition 'Hot Rod' is finally starting to prove himself in no uncertain terms.

Taking small steps forward ever since his arrival on the enduro scene, it wasn't until last year that he started to show himself as a rider capable of regular podium finishes. Fast but often inconsistent, his up and down results in the Enduro 2 class aboard a 450 TM in 2009 and 2010 suggested that Rodrig might make a good – but not necessarily great – enduro rider.

"I believe that first you have to really like enduro before you can become good at it," offers Thain, referring to what lies ahead for motocross racers switching their focus. "You spend a lot of time on a bike each day and if you don't like that then you're never going to succeed. Fred Bolley didn't like it so much and didn't stay long but I do like it. Enduro is a puzzle and you have to put all the pieces together before you can become good at it at the highest level. I feel like I'm really starting to put all the pieces together now."

The opening two rounds of the 2012 EWC series saw Rodrig deliver his best

Hot Rod took a career-first EWC round win at the end of 2011 and carried the momentum that came with it through the off-season



ever start to a new championship. But his results were anything but a surprise. Building on his first and so far only EWC day win at the closing round of the 2011 season, armed with his 250F Honda Rodrig spent the winter re-reading himself for what he knew would be a tough season ahead.

"My results in Chile were a great start to my championship," he confirms. "I was leading the E1 class after the first lap but then made a mistake on the enduro test when I caught Matti Seistola. I lost over one minute and my chance to win was gone. It was too bad because I was riding well – I was almost there. But to win you have to make no mistakes. After that mistake I pushed really hard and crashed on the extreme

test so I realised it was better to finish second."

While day two didn't go quite as well, a second podium finish with third in class saw Rodrig the second best performer in the Enduro 1 class behind Antoine Meo. Not a bad way to start the new championship.

"I was riding really tight on day two with a lot of arm pump for some reason. I was off the pace a little on the enduro test but finishing on the podium again was good."

One of the reasons Rodrig didn't do quite as well on day two as he did on the first was because he was a little too aggressive – something that with his motocross and supercross background comes naturally.

"I was a little too aggressive because I



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wanted to do as well as I had on day one. It's hard to know exactly how hard to push to go faster. Riding smooth is sometimes the way. The secret is knowing how to ride and being able to change from test to test. It takes time to learn that but I think I'm finally understanding it."

It was in early October last year that Rodrig's quest to top an EWC podium finally came good. Nearing the end of his first season in the Enduro 1 class he used his home race to show that he could win.

"Last year I wanted to get at least one win," admits Thain. "And when I arrived at the final race of the year I hadn't done that yet so I knew I had to give everything. I caught a slower rider on the enduro test on day one and crashed, losing a lot of time. So I knew I couldn't win then. I really went for it on the last day. My fourth place in the championship was safe so I just gave it my all. I managed to beat Juha Salminen to win the day which was a big thing for me because the day before he claimed his eighth world title. He told me after the race that he didn't want to let me win but he crashed trying to stop me. It was a great day for me."

Carrying the momentum of his victory over into his winter preparations, the fact that Rodrig

was staying with the same team and in the same class meant he could focus on simply getting faster. Knowing that double EWC champion Meo would be back in the E1 class, Rodrig knew that arriving at the first race with anything other than his best form would see him struggle.

"I worked really hard over the winter and my goal this year is to try and win some more races. I know it won't be easy. Antoine is very fast and I expect Eero Remes and Matti Seistola to be strong too. But I also did a lot of testing with the bike. It's my second season with the 250F Honda so I know the bike well. I also believe in my capabilities a little more now which I think showed in South America."

Up against Meo, Remes, Seistola and more in the Enduro 1 class, Rodrig is quick to point out that there's definitely no such thing as an 'easier' class in the EWC nowadays. Having raced in the E2 class prior to 2011 where competition was every bit as tough as it is now in E1, Rodrig sees no point in trying to switch classes in the hope of an easier championship.

"It's always tough in E1 and E2 but also in E3 the top guys are really fast. There's no such thing as an easy championship in the EWC so I don't really mind what class I'm in. To win – which I want to do – you have to be the best. >>

In ISDE action for France in '09



Rodrig tears it up indoors although he admits he prefers to race in the fresh air



RODRIG ON...

INDOOR ENDURO

"It's not really for me. I did okay in Genoa last winter but it's tough to do well with no real preparation. I had a good qualifying time there and was second in the first race before I drowned my bike in the water. You have to train for indoor enduro races, more than most people imagine. You can't just turn up and do well. You have to train specifically for a couple of months and really get ready. It's as different to enduro as motocross is to supercross."

THE ISDE

"It's a really good experience and a great race. But I was a little bit sad that the French team didn't go to Finland last year. There were some problems with the federation and without their support it's impossible to compete. I hope to go and race in Germany this year. It's in the town where my girlfriend comes from and should be a tough but enjoyable race. We have a really good atmosphere within the French team so I hope to be a part of it again."

SOUTH AMERICA

"Coming from winter in Europe the heat was very different to what everyone was used to but I really like to start the championship with an overseas trip. The tests have been a little bit different to what we're used to but they've been good. Both the events in Chile and Argentina have been well organised and worthy of being a part of the world championship."

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Hot Rod



Thain gives it beans in an extreme test in 2011

RODRIG ON...

RACING A 250F

"The Honda's a great bike and I love racing the 250F because you can be so aggressive. It's a compromise riding a 250F. At the end of the day it's easier to manage than a 450 but you have to ride it harder which takes more of your energy."

SUPERCROSS

"I miss it every weekend when I see it on the internet. I'd love to go back to the US and do some more supercross in the States, just to enjoy it and see how I'd get on. I sometimes ride my enduro bike on supercross tracks and can still ride pretty well – I'd like to maybe do the first four or five races on the West Coast. But I know that I have to stay focused on enduro so I can't see it happening soon."

THE OFF-SEASON

"It started in the best possible way as my daughter was born in November. For the first two months after the championship finished it was great. But the news that Mika had died was hard to deal with, especially for some people in the team. He was often at the team's base and of course we expected to see him at the races. It's hard knowing that he's gone. Sadly it happens but we will never forget the great man he was."



The Frenchman impressed at this year's South American EWC series opener

HUI KULU



That is the same in all the classes."

Although now one of the fastest riders in the E1 class and a full-time enduro professional, Rodrig didn't try his hand at enduro until he returned from a six-year stint of racing in the States. Having raced AMA supercross after his win at Bercy, initially competing in enduro was simply a 'try it and see' option.

"My career has been an interesting journey," acknowledges Hot Rod. "To start with it was difficult for me because I was racing in the French motocross and supercross series with no team. But when I won at the Bercy SX Kurt Nicoll got me a deal to race in the US. I was able to earn some money there and had some good results. I was 19 when I went there. But I had some injuries and wasn't enjoying racing any more so I decided to stop and come back to

Europe. It was really tough in the States at times but it's great now that I can say that I have been on the podium in US supercross and the EWC.

"I really knew nothing about enduro when I first tried it. I didn't know who Mika Ahola was or Juha Salminen. I figured that I could beat them but instead I got beaten – and beaten badly. I realised enduro was very different to what I was used to. I was 40 seconds off the pace on some enduro tests. I put my head down and decided that I could do it if I worked at it. It's taken some time but now I am finally starting to get the results I knew I was capable of."

One thing that has helped Rodrig adapt to life as an enduro racer is the fact that he is one of numerous French riders currently doing exceptionally well in the EWC. With many having similar motorcycle racing backgrounds to himself

there's friendship, competition and camaraderie among the French enduro ranks.

"There's competition between us all because we all want to do well," explains Rodrig. "But we are a big group of friends and we train together a lot during the winter. I'm not sure why there are so many French riders in the EWC today but for me it's good that there is."

"In my entire career I've always taken little steps. It was the same when I raced motocross and supercross in the States. Some riders enjoy success straight away. I'm not like that. Even if it takes me 10 years I will keep on trying to win an Enduro World Championship. I like racing in all conditions which is good for winning a championship. But I have to start winning races as well. That's my goal for the rest of the season..."

STEALTH BOMBER!

GROWING UP IN IOWA, JUSTIN BRAYTON'S ULTIMATE DREAM WAS TO RACE THE ARENACROSS AT DES MOINES WHICH IS A WORLD AWAY FROM A FACTORY HONDA DEAL AND RUNNING TOP THREE IN SUPERCROSS...

In American motocross and supercross nearly every current factory racer was basically a factory racer the moment they came out of the amateur ranks – or, in many cases, while still an amateur. Honda Muscle Milk's Justin Brayton might be the only exception. If you could chart his career it has been a steady upward trend since he turned pro a decade ago. Now 28 years old, Brayton is just hitting his stride.

Brayton grew up in Iowa, in America's Midwest, where the winters tend to be frozen which means he could never really race full-time, year-round, as an amateur. However, arenacross was something to look forward to as the series opener took place an hour from his house in Des Moines and arenacross in general – racing in a tight, indoor, climate-controlled venue – makes sense in that area of the country in the winter.

Brayton never set his sights higher than racing at Des Moines which he saw as his own Anaheim 1.

"Growing up in Iowa, I always felt like supercross was so far-fetched..." Brayton says. "It was almost in a dream world. I would just watch it on TV. For me the Des Moines arenacross was like my supercross. That was my ultimate dream, to race that race one day. Eventually I got to do it. I actually almost won my first time there. I was fastest in practice and I beat one of my idols, Damon Bradshaw, in my heat race. It was awesome.

"If I would have been done racing motorcycles after that night it seems like I would have been happy. That was just my life-long dream. And then opportunities started presenting themselves and I got a chance to move to California.

"Buddy Antunez kind of took me under his wing while we were team-mates and introduced me to a

bunch of people. Then I started seeing supercross as kind of a reality. I went to a few races to watch and I was like 'man, I might be able to do this'. Definitely coming from Iowa it seemed like a long-shot but here we are racing supercross."

Another side-effect of growing up in Iowa was that Brayton wasn't ever the full-time, factory-backed amateur star which meant he actually played school sports and had a relatively normal upbringing.

"Amateur wise it was never really that serious," Brayton says. "I think during the summer we would take Loretta's seriously and I would train for a couple months before that – hit all the area qualifiers, regional qualifiers and then go to Loretta's and just kind of see how we did. I never had a trainer. My parents never put pressure on me like, we just did it for complete fun.

"The first time I went to Loretta's on 80s I got fourth and it was like, 'wow, maybe we're better than we thought' but still I maybe raced once or twice a month and went to school and to my school dances and football games and just lived a completely normal life. My number one thing that I would tell anybody is just to try and really enjoy it and enjoy those years of your life.

"I remember I was going for Rookie of the Year in 2002 in arenacross," Brayton continues, "and I had missed a bunch of races but then it basically came down to one of the final races and I didn't race so I could go to my senior prom. That's how important it was to my family and to me to do really well in school and to enjoy that time of your life. To make it to this level is not really something you can have planned out and say 'my kid is going to race pro and make X amount of money'. There are a couple guys that have done it that way but 90 per cent of the time it doesn't work."



Steve Cox is a Glock-packin', racoon-shootin', gung-ho American MX journo who likes everything big – trucks, burgers, ears and women's asses – who follows the entire AMA SXMX tour. Since moving on from

defunct US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

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Brayton began to shine following a move to 450s with Joe Gibbs Racing in 2010



After graduating high school in 2002 Brayton had a year to make his mark...

"My parents actually gave me an ultimatum when I graduated," Brayton says. "They said 'we'll give you one year to race arenacross - if you don't make it you're going to go to college'. And I kind of did. I started getting a salary racing arenacross. It wasn't much but I was enjoying racing and making a little money."

Still, Brayton stayed in Iowa year-round and just flew to the arenacross races on the weekends until 2004 when he moved to California to stay with Antunez.

"When I first moved to California I would ride all day and then I would be the one washing my bike, changing the filter, changing tyres, doing everything. I would change the piston rings on the two-stroke back in the day. I've definitely had to do that. I remember my step-dad saying that his dream was to one day be able to just kind of relax at the race and not really have to work and for me to have my own mechanic. And I thought about that when he said it and I'm like 'there's no way that will happen, there's no way I'll be at a factory level where I have my own mechanic'."

But it just so happened that he also ran into a fortunate situation where the Factory Connection Honda team was looking for a fill-in rider on

its Lites squad.

"Actually, Buddy Antunez contacted [Honda's] Erik Kehoe after arenacross was over and threw my name in the hat," Brayton says. "And Kehoe then called me and I flew to California and did kind of a try-out and they ended up hiring me for the last six races in 2004. I did two East Coast and three or four West Coast rounds, including the East/West Shootout. I got a few top 10s and kind of opened some eyes."

Having shown he was a capable supercross racer in his short fill-in ride with the Factory Connection team, things started picking up for Brayton. He secured a ride with the Motoworld team, then moved up to the factory-backed KTM squad for 2008 and 2009. He fell just short of race wins but always showed a lot of speed. After that he moved onto the Joe Gibbs Racing Yamaha team to race 450s in 2010 and 2011 and he began to shine.

However, even today and even though he's moved from the JGR squad to the Factory Honda team and has competed for race wins it seems as if he largely goes unnoticed.

"It's been like that my whole career," Brayton says. "I feel like I'm one of the guys now. I feel like when I come to the races I have a legit chance of winning the race and for sure being



So far this season Brayton's been on the box four times - although he had a bit of a nightmare at Daytona





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on the podium. But I haven't won a championship. I haven't even won a supercross race. I don't know if I should be categorised as one of those guys.

"I have the speed to run with them. I've beaten them all in a heat race or in a Main Event, I just haven't won the race. But it's not like I think it's unfair. I would say those four or five guys, they have championships to their credit and I don't. I feel like I'm right there, though. I'm right there on the cusp of being one of those guys. So I just keep working and I would have never, like I said earlier, never thought I would race supercross in the first place – let alone be on the podium at a supercross, in the 450 class, riding for Factory Honda..."

For a guy who literally never even dreamed of having his own mechanic, racing for Factory Honda at the top level seems crazy in some ways. It's a popular belief that you have to dream big in order to achieve but that's not how Brayton got here.

"I've always had a strong belief in myself that anything that really challenged me I would try and be the best at," Brayton says. "All through school I played most sports. It seemed like I would just challenge myself and be the best at that sport. This is really no different I think. I think I was just born with that and it's just taken me a little bit longer to really believe it. If I would have gotten this ride four years ago I don't think I would have been ready for it. I wouldn't have instilled that belief in myself, even if I had the skills. It's just taken me a little bit longer but my track record kind of proves itself.

"Every year I've gotten better and better and

better and I think that's just the belief, better teams and just working up that ladder. Now I feel like I'm at the top of that ladder. I just need to go get it done."

He is at the top now. He's on probably the top team in the history of AMA MX and SX racing and it's all on him now.

"That's the biggest thing about here at Honda – there's pressure because you have the best bike and you have the best equipment to go do good. But that's the type of pressure that I really enjoy. I don't want to have the pressure of being on just a mediocre team and then be told I'm supposed to go win. That really doesn't make sense.

"So, when I'm here I have the equipment, have the people, have everything around me to go win. I think that's great pressure. But the team doesn't really put that pressure on me – they just really try and help me. If we get a second, let's look at the things that I did wrong and look at the things that I did really well and learn from it."

As he said, though, Brayton is aware of the fact that there is one more step to make in his racing career. Winning.

"I think I've done everything, really, except win races," Brayton says. "That's the goal every time I come to the races now – to try and win the race. I know I'm going to get it done, it's just a matter of when. It could be tonight, could be next weekend. I think after that it's just going to start snowballing. I've had a string of podiums – three in the last four or five weeks. So, I think once you do it then you believe that. Once you do another thing you start to believe that a little more and just keep the ball rolling."



Outdoor action from Steel City in 2009



Brayton knows he needs to start winning Main Events in the very near future



THE CRYING GAME!

**YOU KNOW A SPORT'S TOUGH WHEN THE DEFENDING
CHAMPION SUCCESSFULLY REGAINS HIS TITLE BEFORE
CRASHING OUT FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON...**

As it turns out, racing dirt bikes is dangerous. Can you believe it? This is almost as shocking as finding out that smoking cigarettes doesn't improve your cardiovascular health. But, alas, it's tragically true. After a 2011 season that saw only a handful of 450cc championship favourites make it to the end of the title chase, the 2012 Monster Energy AMA SX series seems to have lost just about everyone.

450

Defending champ Ryan Villopoto of the Monster Energy Kawasaki team has been doing a lot of winning in 2012 while most of his rivals have been busy crashing and getting hurt.

In Houston Villopoto has a chance to make history and clinch the title with a full four rounds left to run. In order to do this he has to win the Main Event while rival James Stewart has to finish fourth or worse in his first race back after missing the Toronto event with a concussion.

Off the start it's Stewart's team-mate Davi Millsaps who grabs the holeshot but Villopoto doesn't waste any time getting into the lead. He grabs the spot and tries to pull

away but a few mistakes keep Millsaps close. Meanwhile, Villopoto's team-mate Jake Weimer grabs third from Mike Alessi early on and is doing his part in keeping Millsaps honest in second.

Behind them the fans have their eyes on Stewart as he's the only guy in the field who can prolong the title chase by finishing in the top three in the Main Event. He starts well outside the top 10 and actually grabs 10th place on the second lap. On lap six, while running ninth, Stewart goes down hard, knocking himself out of the race once again and handing a guaranteed championship defence to Villopoto.

Out front Villopoto hangs on for yet another win, clinching the title in the process.

"I'm just really happy it's over," Villopoto says. "Now I get to go test for the outdoors which I didn't really get to do last year because all we did was ride supercross all the way through to the end of the SX season. But this feels great."

With his 2012 title, Villopoto becomes the first racer ever to clinch the title four races early. He also becomes the first repeat 450cc champ since fellow redhead Ricky Carmichael last successfully defended a championship in 2006.

The series moves to The Big

Easy – New Orleans, Louisiana – for round 14 and Villopoto avoids yet another calamity when he grabs the holeshot while a whole slew of guys go down in the first turn. Later in that lap Weimer jumps off the track over the first triple and rejoins the race dead last. With Villopoto out front, though, the race is over just as soon as it starts and he goes on to take his ninth win of the season over Josh Grant who's missed more than half the season due to injuries. Justin Brayton grabs third.

Round 15 in Seattle marks Villopoto's hometown race as he hails from the Pacific Northwest. Having clinched the 2012 title it's like a victory lap for the popular local hero. Well, sort of...

A tough start mires him deep in the pack in the Main Event and an incident on the second lap of the race sees him limp off the track for his first DNF of the year. Prior to Seattle, Villopoto had only finished off of the podium twice and had never finished outside the top five.

The Monday following the Seattle event the team announces that Villopoto suffered a severe knee injury and he's out for the rest of 2012 which means he will be unable to defend his 2011 AMA National MX championship.





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Ryan Dungey's back in action in
Seattle – and back on top of the
box in Salt Lake City



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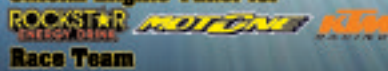
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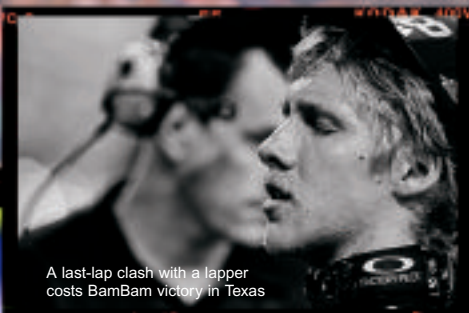


FOX 180 ROCKSTAR

Blake Wharton sits fourth in the Lites East division but is just one point from second



There's a shock win for Ken Roczen in Houston when Justin Barcia falls on the final lap



A last-lap clash with a lapper costs BamBam victory in Texas



Jake Weimer plays bumper cars with Dungey in Salt Lake City

In Seattle it's Andrew Short who has the early lead over 17-year-old Ken Roczen and Weimer. Former champ Ryan Dungey returns to action in Seattle and is gaining on the top four racers in the Main Event when he gets hung up in a berm and goes down, eventually finishing sixth. Short leads the entire Main Event over Roczen and on the final lap Weimer's breathing down both of their necks as he soaks up pressure himself from Justin Brayton. But Short ends up taking his first career 450cc victory over Roczen and Weimer.

The penultimate round of the championship heads over to the Mormon stronghold of Salt Lake City, Utah, where Davi Millsaps grabs the holeshot, leading Weimer off the start while Dungey is moving his way forward from very early on.

Before the halfway point Dungey catches Weimer and immediately begins playing brake-checking games and taking Weimer high in turns. Weimer was taken out by Dungey in San Diego and apparently he has a memory like an elephant and

takes Dungey high in a turn, causing the KTM racer to fall. But Weimer gets armpump in the exchange and Dungey gets up, catches him again, passes him and then sets out after Millsaps.

With two laps to go Dungey sneaks by Millsaps in traffic and takes the lead and the eventual win – his third of the year – over Millsaps and Weimer.

LITES EAST

With Justin Barcia running away with the Lites East title chase for the second year in a row things are looking grim for anyone else to be able to challenge 'BamBam'.

In Houston it's Ken Roczen who grabs the holeshot but Barcia is right on his tail and wastes no time making a move for the lead and then taking off with yet another Main Event. Barcia is helped out a lot by Blake Baggett who begins to put pressure on Roczen until a few bobbles by Baggett in the middle of the race give K-Roc enough breathing room to settle into a comfortable second place while Baggett

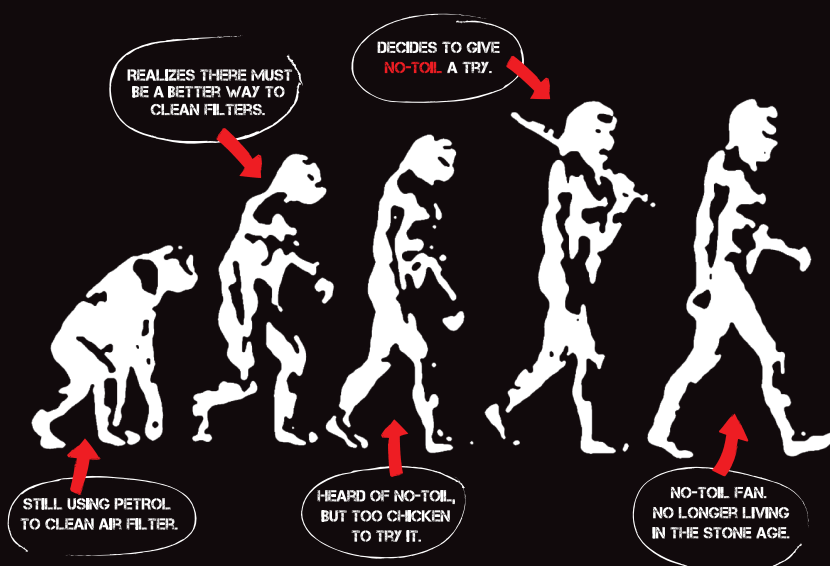
does the same in third.

Then the impossible happens for Roczen on the last lap as Barcia tangles with a lapper and goes down hard and although he scrambles back to his bike as quickly as possible he gets going right behind Roczen and the German holds on to take his first win of 2012 over Barcia and Baggett.

The last round of the Lites East – well, at least prior to the official Lites East finale in Las Vegas – marks the final chance for the normally dominant Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team to take a win back east. For whatever reason Mitch Payton's boys have been having a tough go of it in the east and while both team racers – Baggett and Darryn Durham – have been on the podium a few times neither of them have managed to win a single race up to New Orleans.

Alex Martin grabs the holeshot in the Lites Main over Durham, Barcia, Malcolm Stewart and Baggett. Durham only waits a lap before snatching the lead as Stewart moves into second but then tosses that

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spot away on lap four to hand it to Barcia while Baggett slots into third. A couple of mistakes from Barcia open the door for Baggett and Barcia's team-mate Justin Bogle to sneak by at around the halfway point and from there the top three are set.

Durham avoids a couple of pretty scary incidents to grab his first win of the season – and of his career – just in front of his hard-charging team-mate Baggett. The Pro Circuit squad goes 1-2 and completes a sweep of both classes in The Big Easy while Barcia clinches his second Lites East championship. He'll be heading up to the 450cc class in 2013.

LITES WEST

After eight weeks off the Lites West returns to battle in Seattle. Prior to the break Eli Tomac was dominating the title chase until the San Diego round where he went down hard in the whoops and suffered a DNF, handing a two-point lead to Dean Wilson.

In Seattle, Ryan Sipes grabs the early lead while Tomac and Wilson begin a battle over second place. Wilson pushes Tomac over two different berms and runs into him a third time but Tomac refuses to go down. This is bad news for Wilson and just past the halfway point Tomac charges to the inside and the two collide with Wilson going down incredibly hard.

To his credit Wilson gets up and toughs it out to finish seventh and salvage slim title hopes.

Tomac can only manage third at the finish because in the collision his shift lever is bent and he's stuck in third gear so with a few laps left his clutch is toast. He loses second to Frenchman Marvin Musquin and nearly has Cole Seely go by him before the finish. So Tomac carries a four-point lead into Salt Lake City while Wilson spends most of the week between races getting therapy on a banged up shoulder in the hopes that it will be good enough for him to race.

The therapy seems to have done the trick and Wilson is fast all day, even winning his heat race in Salt Lake. In the Main Event it's Jason Anderson who grabs the lead off the start and Wilson pulls up into second place on the second lap. But Tomac is gaining quickly and only a few laps later he goes by Wilson – cleanly this time – and then sets out after Anderson.

With three laps left Wilson loses control and swaps into the face of the finish line jump, going down in a heap on his bad shoulder and dropping out of the race. Almost simultaneously, Tomac goes by Anderson for the lead and pulls away for the win and the title. Anderson finishes second in the race just in front of his team-mate Martin Davalos.

With the title Tomac's GEICO Honda team completes its first-ever clean sweep of the Lites East and West titles, shutting out the powerful Pro Circuit squad. Pro Circuit will surely want revenge outdoors where they won 23 out of 24 motos in 2011.



Justin Brayton holds on to third in the 450 standings in Salt Lake City

Former world MX2 champ Marvin Musquin is third in the Lites West division



Eli Tomac celebrates the Lites West title in Utah



© hopenworld.com

SERIES STANDINGS

SUPERCROSS

1	Ryan Villopoto	323
2	Davi Millsaps	244
3	Justin Brayton	237
4	Ryan Dungey	232
5	Jake Weimer	211
6	Mike Alessi	192
7	James Stewart	178
8	Brett Metcalfe	174
9	Kevin Windham	166
10	Broc Tickle	161

LITES EAST

1	Justin Barcia	185
2	Darryn Durham	143
3	Ken Roczen	143
4	Blake Wharton	142
5	Blake Baggett	128
6	Jake Canada	118
7	Justin Bogle	107
8	Kyle Cunningham	70
9	Alex Martin	67
10	Matt Lemoine	66

LITES WEST

1	Eli Tomac	159
2	Dean Wilson	132
3	Marvin Musquin	127
4	Cole Seely	119
5	Jason Anderson	95
6	Matt Moss	92
7	Billy Laninovich	84
8	Ryan Sipes	83
9	Nico Izzi	78
10	Travis Baker	75

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If he was eligible to race MX2 at the MXdN then Matt Moss could help the Aussies win it



BENDING THE RULES!

YOUTHSTREAM SEEM HAPPY TO MOVE THE GOALPOSTS TO ENSURE AMA PARTICIPATION IN THE MXdN SO HOW ABOUT THEY MOVE THEM SOME MORE TO BENEFIT THE REST OF THE WORLD?

Words and photo by **Steve Cox**

Youthstream and the FIM have sort of made a habit of instituting new rules – or just ignoring existing ones – for the Motocross des Nations in order to enable the AMA teams and racers to compete without too much hassle.

We've seen exceptions for fuel allowed and for sound requirements but none of these 'tweaks' make as much sense as the one Chad Reed proposed to me while we were sitting in the pits at the New Orleans SX shooting the sh*t.

Chad believes Youthstream and the FIM should get rid of the age rule for the MX2 class for that one race of the year. This is a great idea I hadn't thought about and it's an idea I hope gains traction for a multitude of reasons. First of all, I think the rule is kind of dumb to start with. Pro racing is pro racing so having age rules doesn't really help keep things competitive. All it does is take really good MX2 racers who may not be great MX1 racers and send them packing out of the sport altogether.

Secondly, while the biggest reason the event draws so many more fans than a normal GP is that AMA racers – guys like Reed, Ryan Villopoto and former FIM racers like Marvin Musquin and Tyla Rattray – are on display, that doesn't mean the GP fans don't want to see the AMA racers (especially Team USA) lose. Because they do.

And that never happens. So GP fans could get sick of losing eventually.

There's no country in the world with more highly-qualified racers who meet the MX2 age rule than the USA. So, the second reason this rule change makes sense for the MXdN is that it would help other teams compete with and possibly beat Team USA. A lot of countries have three really strong racers but not that many have three really strong racers with one of them meeting the age qualification for the MX2 class.

And that leads to the third reason this makes sense. The spirit of the MXdN is to put every country's three best racers against one another to determine the fastest country in the world for that year. That's the idea. So if age rules disqualify one of any country's three absolute best racers from racing the race is no longer about who has the fastest three racers. Instead, it's about the fastest three 'qualifying' racers and things begin to dilute.

Australia landed its first-ever MXdN podium last year and here's the thing – the race is to be held this year in the sand of Lommel. Brett Metcalfe is a truly great sand rider. So is Chad Reed. Yes, Reed is hurt right now but he hopes to be healthy in time to get in shape, race the last couple of Nationals in the USA, then head to Lommel to take on the world yet again.

The problem is who will be Australia's MX2 racer? They certainly have some available but their best 250cc sand riders are twins Matt and Jake Moss and they're 24.

So, according to the current rules, even though they both race 250Fs for a living they're ineligible to compete for Australia in the MX2 class at the MXdN. And why? What's the point? All that rule does is make the MXdN less competitive and violate the original intention of the race.

For this year's MXdN imagine if Belgium could throw Stefan Everts into the MX2 class? I really like Joel Roelants – and Jeremy van Horebeek is a great racer too – but in the sand I believe Everts with time to train would be clearly superior to either of them in the MX2 class. And it would be perhaps the biggest story of the decade in motocross racing. GP fans would murder each other to get into the MXdN this year if this were to come to pass. And AMA fans would do likewise while simultaneously trembling in fear of the USA's first loss since returning to the race in 2005.

So, if anyone at Youthstream and the FIM is reading this listen to an American when I say help the world beat Team USA. Get rid of this rule, even if just for this one event. It's not too late. Do it now!



MICRO DIFFERENCE?

CAN A ONE-HIT ENGINE TREATMENT INCREASE POWER AND ENGINE LONGEVITY LIKE ITS MANUFACTURERS MICROLON CLAIM? WE SENT OUR HEAD TESTER ED BRADLEY TO FIND OUT...

WORDS BY **ED BRADLEY** PHOTOS BY **SUTTY**

Back in 1964 an American gunsmith called Bill Williams got all curious about how to reduce the friction of a bullet as it tear-arsed out of a barrel. In the olden days this friction was wearing out barrels every few hundred rounds fired which obviously ain't long enough if you're doing regular drive-bys or shooting critters! So Kill Bill set about finding a solution and came up with a liquid that contained a cleaning complex and an anti-friction resin. It worked for the gun and a light bulb was lit with the connection made between 'a bullet passing down gun' and 'a piston going up and down a barrel'. Behold! Microlon was born!

But what the dickens does this have to do with high performance MX bikes? Well, to be honest I was asking myself the same question and was feeling a little sceptical. I mean, if this product has been around for decades how come everyone isn't using it already?

Apparently, Microlon is a relatively small company that enjoys huge success in America and isn't too bothered about world domination. However, when Stuart Crane started to import the products into the UK he saw new areas for expansion. Initially

this didn't inspire me too much as we talked about how reducing friction in lorry engines can save haulage companies bucketloads of dosh. This is clearly a worthwhile market for Microlon to be in and any hauliers reading this might want to haul their butts over to the Microlon website now – it's www.microloneurope.co.uk by the way...

Stuart explained the many applications that the products have with their main focus being in the engine and the gearbox as these are the places with most heat and moving parts. There are also suspension products that reduce friction on internal parts and even your chain can be done too. Now I'm not sure they had thought this through very well when they took the chain off my bike in the workshop and started the curing treatment because my chain isn't going to last very long due to me riding mostly in sandy conditions. The last thing I'm going to want to do is spend ages treating a chain that might only give me a 0.000001 per cent horsepower increase.

Anyway, we were at Paul Butler's Suzuki GB Youth MX team workshop in Gloucestershire to test the engine additive so we could let Stuart's exuberance and enthusiasm pass us by as we focused on the good stuff – making bikes go faster for

longer! We used three products – a fuel additive and two engine treatments so both the top and bottom end of your four-banger gets sorted (it can also be used on two-smokers).

The first job for the additives is to clean the internal metal surfaces. Once the metal surfaces are as clean as a surgeon's scalpel special antioxidants and corrosion inhibitors get to work and impregnate the metals of your engine. The resin that old man Bill discovered leaves itself incorporated into the top layer of metal and becomes an integral part of the surfaces it protects.

It basically leaves a dry film lubricant that is resistant to chemicals and capable of withstanding heat so it won't burn out, gum up or affect anything else and it leaves everything smooth inside – I bet there are a few people thinking I could do with some of this for myself!

With the treatment complete and all metal surfaces gliding almost friction free the insides of the engine should be as smooth as Joey Tribbiani but how does this translate out on the track? >>



The image features three cans of Microlon products against a dark background. The largest can, 'MICROLON COMPOUND-90', is upright and has a silver cap. It features the text 'AWARD WINNING METAL TREATMENT TECHNOLOGY' and a gold medal icon. Below the name, it says 'The one-time metal treatment' and 'Reduces friction'. To its left, a smaller can of 'MICROLON ENGINE TREATMENT' is tilted, showing its silver cap and the same award-winning technology text. It lists benefits: 'Reduces friction', 'Reduces maintenance', and 'Extends equipment life'. In the foreground, another smaller can of 'MICROLON FUEL SYSTEM TREATMENT' is lying on its side, also showing the award-winning technology text and benefits: 'Reduces friction', 'Reduces maintenance', 'Extends engine life', and 'Provides smoother operation'. A yellow band at the bottom of this can contains the volume '8.4 FL. OZ. NET (250 ml)' and a warning: 'DANGER: Harmful or fatal if swallowed. See back panel for further information.'

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The mastermind behind the new MX Coach App lets rip

Well, before the bike turned a wheel it was important to know that Microlon products need to be installed in a precise way. Stuart suggested it be done by a dealer or someone who knows the correct procedure so you can guarantee the right result.

Arriving at the private track under clear blue skies I actually felt like setting up a picnic as we pulled up on a hillside meadow that's nestled between two woods with horses grazing on the short and very green grass. It was a peaceful place. Anyway, that didn't last long because I was way too excited to get the bike out and have a rip, pull some wheelies and do some skids. Finding my way around the nearly two-minute lap took some time because it had been a while since I'd ridden on grassy hills with rocks underneath the topsoil because it's mostly very flat and sandy in Doncaster!

To test the difference in performance was going to be a challenge, unless that is you have my new App which you can now download from iTunes that's called MX Coach! Of course it's awesome if you want to get fitter and ride faster. It's also completely ace for testing because with the 'bike test' section of the App you can enter bike details such as suspension clicker settings, tyres, exhaust pipe, gearing etc then go out on to the track and record a bunch of lap times. Come back in and make the changes to your bike – in our case the treatments – and then record another bunch of laps. The App records the changes you have made to your bike and your lap times so you can see any difference in bike performance without having to rely on a rider's emotional feedback – happy days especially if your rider is young and/or can ride a five bar gate and think it's set up great!

Ruthless plug over it was time for Sully to earn his bread as he recorded a bunch of lap times with one hand and took photos with the other – then it was back to the van to change the oil and, er, add the additives. Adding the Microlon



Paul Butler and Ed discuss the finer points of correct clutch hose routing...

is the easy part. Dump the right amount in the fuel tank and when you fill the engine oil leave room for the additive. Next is the boring part. Fire your bike up and let it tick over for an hour so the cleaning and coating can be done. It was evident after six or seven minutes or so that this wasn't going to happen as my bike was crying for cool air to be sucked through its radiator fins. That meant I needed to ride the bike slow for just over 50 minutes – yawn!

At least it was pretty around there and I could admire the nature. I even saw a deer in the trees close to the track. No chance of doing a Greg Albertyn and nailing it though as the throttle was only set to boring. To help with the process Paul Butler's speedy son Keaton did a stint on my bike and this gave me the opportunity to have a rip on his little RM one-two-tiddly that's been Microloned to the max. This is a standard 125 and has that familiar comfy feel to it that the Suzuki two-strokes have but the motor is really strong.

I actually really embarrassed myself when the motor totally caught me off guard. As I exited a slight uphill turn a combination of tiring arms and a strong hit from the powerful mid-range meant the flippin' bike put me on my



Keaton Butler's Microlon-treated RM125 is flippin' quick

back – literally. The last time I flipped a bike was in the '80s on an 80!

Just as I was about to start my second bunch of timed laps we hit a snag. The newly fitted hydraulic clutch hose had been touching the exhaust pipe and burned a hole in it resulting in me having no clutch – oops! So we decided to record a bunch of laps anyway and see what happened. I'd already chosen a couple of places on the track where I was likely to notice a difference and riding around a fairly hilly circuit with no clutch was quite good fun – there wasn't even any flipping it this time.

What I noticed was subtle and that's when you closed the throttle the engine revs dropped smoothly rather than abruptly. It was the same with the pick up – as if the engine revs glide up the range rather than being forced. However subtle the change is, there's a difference. Interestingly, I rode the bike two seconds faster with a treated engine and no clutch!

This product does have its place but who is it for? I think it will mostly benefit the bikes of hobby riders who ride for a long time in between oil changes. It probably has less importance for riders who are racing at the highest level – however every little helps, right?

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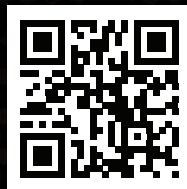
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ACTION STATIONS!

TEAM PS3 HIT THE TRACK AT POLESWORTH FOR A HEFTY DOSE OF TWINSHOCK RACING – SHAME NEITHER ARE FULLY PREPPED...

Words by **Rob Bayman** Photos by **Andrew Walch**

Aware neither myself nor PS3 were completely ready we still made the starting line-up for both races of the opening national twinshock round at Polesworth.

Usually bright-eyed and bushy-tailed, PS3 and the Circus Bear (that's me!) were loaded ready to hit the trail at 5.45am on race day but on this occasion we were far from our usual selves as an involuntary repetitive attraction to the bog had threatened the event all the previous week. A super dose of Imodium was my only hope as we made that uncomfortable three-hour hike after just two hours of interrupted sleep.

My team-mate and cousin Maico Phil who arrived the night before had reserved a slot amid the Cheshire boys to keep us all together. Our camp had numerous lumps of aged but beautifully turned out iron scattered within and PS3 – even without the much anticipated exhaust – looked in an honestly absolutely fabulous.

Eager Andrew had PS3 running within seconds of practice being announced to waken the camp. Early comments were not as expected and rather than the anticipated utterings of how sweet it sounded interest was raised by the strawberry smell of my Ipone two-stroke oil – oh and just how loud she is on the standard silencer (don't forget these OEM silencers are sealed unpackable stubby items that just dampen the sonic crack rather than reduce decibels).

Practice was a saddening reminder of just how slow I have become – 'pathetic' is actually a compliment – but aesthetically we looked stunning with both PS3 and me in our new frocks. Having not practised a start on PS3 since 1982 I tucked myself out of harm's way on the startline until they had all the group away, notched third cog and at 75 per cent throttle dumped the clutch while simultaneously hitting the throttle stop. My memories of an arm-wrenching, arse-leaking drive from the gate were ill-placed as the hibernating spiders within the pipe just about wandered out of the silencer and I wobbled up the hill at a snail's pace. This was not how I remembered the 465 power to be.

At this point take a moment to appreciate we have a way to go

before we are fully dialled, the motor would not rev out cleanly and is richer than a port and venison pie with Stilton crumb topping. In fact the jetting hasn't even made it onto the scale yet but it may be the hybrid stainless steel front section of my pipe letting me down as the length is wrong to give a peaky powerband.

Still, I persevered – nervously rolling off all the drop-offs that my competitors were launching from and even a small tabletop was an uphill followed by a short straight then a downhill with my wheels barely leaving the ground at any point. I'd felt I would suffer from the drum brakes but my complete lack of speed never challenged their stopping ability.

I made a few passes – probably by accident – but even more passed me as I was lapped before the finish flag to reduce my practice session to just two laps instead of three. As a former national champion I think more than a few were disappointed with my performance but I have little to prove and things can only get better.

Race time and I felt delicate and weak from my rigid Imodium diet but I used the same third gear start technique as attempted in practice, shifted to fourth as soon as I felt the engine had peaked and for a stupid moment thought I had the holeshot bagged. Andrew's photograph clearly shows a very different version as I was actually buried in the pack.

I saw a yellow flag raised on the first tabletop where Graham Noyce was sprawled across the track. It's not every day I pass a former world champion but I passed him fair and square along with a couple more competitors in the first few turns, only for the awesome freight train of riders to blast back past me before the first lap was completed.

For a while I held my position before slipping back to what Maico Phil reckoned was an unofficial 18th place finish and in his attempt to voice a positive statement he blurted out "it was obviously you". What he meant was the style was familiar – all knees and elbows with my legs everywhere they shouldn't be. Andrew, on the other hand, didn't mince words. "You were sh*t!" Sadly, I had to agree with him!

Race two saw me struggle off the start and then I ran completely out of steam within two laps but the bike

sort of held out and I completed the race to notch a single point for a 15th place, getting lapped by those I used to challenge for position. Usually a fond supporter, even my pal Pete Mathia giggled "what was that pathetic attempt about?" and it was a fair question.

Maico Phil took the PS3 back to Cheshire where he cleaned it for me ready to go to the workshop for more work on the pipe now the bike is together. The segments and cones are formed but Greenie needs to know if the configuration will interfere with the front fender or wheel, let alone negotiate the sprocket when the swinging arm hits full travel.

It was the first time Greenie had seen the complete bike and he made several references to hating it but he tells fibs to trigger a reaction and I know he admires it really. When his trick pipe goes on, the jetting process can begin and we can be better prepared but not likely in time for round two unless we hit it by chance – even a broken clock is right twice a day so it may be closer than we think.

Maico Phil, having taken a quick scan of the bike as he cleaned it, pointed out that I had lost the front engine mounting bolt, the lower mount was making its way out and the rear fender had lost two of its four anchors. But that's to be expected for a re-built bike raced after spending 30 years in pieces and all she needs is a gallon or two of thread lock before her next run.

So am I disheartened? Not at all. PS3 is brilliant and twinshock racing is fantastic – its friendliness, its characters, the atmosphere, humour and passion create the best environment in which to race. I have raced internationals in numerous continents, spanned at GP level – even at world SX events – and have found this is where many of the good folk and true enthusiasts end up.

It's a place where former world champions, industry royalty and national treasures socialise without prejudice among the guys who came last. If you are interested in the scene and don't know where to start check out the website at nationaltwinshock.co.uk – plenty of bikes were at the meeting for sale in various states of completeness so forget the glass cabinet restorations and come racing with us...



*"And then I stuck a killer pass on Noycey!" Rob, right, treats Maico Phil to the world famous Bayman bullsh*t*



TWINSHOCK TRAGEDY

MATT MURPHY

While journalistic etiquette advocates we don't focus on tragedy or fatality, I feel it appropriate to acknowledge that we lost a fellow competitor at the event. Matt Murphy lost his life in a racing accident and I'd like to express team PS3's sympathy to the Murphy family, the Polesworth club and all the friends of a fellow competitor with absolute sincerity.

WIDE OPEN!

TWO ROUNDS IN AND WE'RE NO CLOSER TO KNOWING WHO ARE GONNA BE THIS YEAR'S BRITISH MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONS...

Words and photos by Sully

At the start of the year most people – myself included – predicted that the MX2 class of the Maxxis British motocross championship would end up being a two horse race between Monster Energy Yamaha team-mates Zach Osborne and Arnaud Tonus. Round one kinda proved that to be true with Tonus winning two out of three motos while Osborne won the other and the overall. But way before round two would leave the line the American spanked himself and now looks likely to miss a huge chunk of the series which leaves us with another summer of dominance from Tonus, right? Actually, wrong!

Entering the second lap of the series' second round at Canada Heights, the Swiss star scrubs himself straight into hospital with a horror crash that also takes out Samsung Yamaha's Graeme Irwin n'all. So straight away we've gone from what was potentially a snoozer of a summer to the point where this whole thing is wide open – the question is who's gonna step forward and claim the prize?

Three likely candidates are Mel Pocock, the third and now only active member of the Monster Energy Yamaha team, super-privateer Neville Bradshaw and HM Plant KTM UK's Elliott Banks-Browne. With Osborne, Tonus and Irwin all out of the running Pocock suddenly finds himself as virtual championship leader by 10 points over Bradshaw who himself has a healthy seven-point gap over Samsung Yamaha's Steven Lenoir. A rotten round one means EBB's 20 points off the series lead although he soon manages to claw some points back.

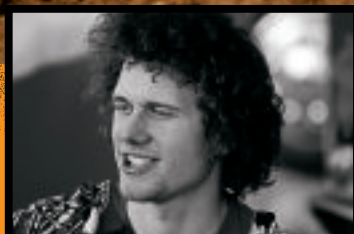
By running 5-1-1 through the day EBB not only wins his first Maxxis motos but also takes the overall n'all – another first for the quietly-spoken bruiser from Bury St Edmunds. "I was leading the

first race but I made a mistake and crashed so I only ended up fifth," says Elliott later. "Race two I took the holeshot and pulled out a good lead until the bike cut out. I got it going again and managed to pass the leader near the end to take my first win in this championship. The last race was more of the same – I holeshot and was just maintaining my lead when they stopped it early. I pulled some good points back in the championship so it's been a good day."

Bradshaw, Pocock and Aubin end the day all tied for second although the better last moto tie-breaker sees 'em ranked in the aforementioned order – Bradshaw's 3-4-2 bettering Pocock's 4-2-3 and Aubin's rather inconsistent 1-3-6! Bry Mac runs a much steadier 6-5-5 to take fifth while Lenoir goes 2-27-4 to end the day sixth overall.

In the championship Pocock leads going into round three at Lyng, the tie with Bradshaw ensuring he's still sat on that same 10-point advantage, while EBB manages to close in on them both and is now just four points shy of the South African Honda rider. Behind them Aubin's the closest challenger (albeit a massive 21 points behind Elliott) with just a handful of points separating the next few – Lenoir, who must be ruing that moto two no-score, Irn Bry and Jordan Booker who's had a cracking start to his season on the Buildbase Honda.

While Kevin Strijbos dominated at FatCat taking all three MX1 wins he doesn't get a sniff of a victory at Canada Heights and his visit to the podium is only to collect the series leader's red plate. But in the grand scheme of things that doesn't really matter because even though he's only fourth overall an inconsistent day all round means he's only two points shy of the winner and still 16 points clear in the standings at the end of it all. >>



MATISS KARRO

"First race I wasn't happy because I threw away a possible win by going for the lead too soon but the second race was perfect and I led gate to flag. The third race was good, I was leading again but I made a small mistake but still came home third which was enough to take the overall."

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K-What's still hurting from round one

SERIES STANDINGS

MX1

1	Kevin Stribbos	HM Plant KTM UK	131
2	Matiss Karro	STR KTM	115
3	Shaun Simpson	Monster Energy Yamaha	113
4	Stephen Sword	Tyco Suzuki by TAS	101
5	Gert Krestinov	MVR-D Honda	92
6	Martin Barr	Maxxis Henderson LPE Kawasaki	88
7	Marc de Reuver	Lanes Kawasaki	70
8	Dorren Coutts	PAR Honda	69
9	Kristian Whatley	PAR Honda	67
10	Jason Dougan	MVR-D Honda	64

MX2

1	Mel Pocock	Monster Energy Yamaha	118
2	Neville Bradshaw	Evo-Tech Stevens Honda	108
3	Elliott Banks-Browne	HM Plant KTM UK	104
4	Nicolas Aubin	Buildbase Honda	83
5	Steven Lenoir	Samsung Yamaha	81
6	Bryan MacKenzie	Moto-One Rockstar KTM	76
7	Jordan Booker	Buildbase Honda	71
8	Zach Osborne	Monster Energy Yamaha	69
9	Stuart Edmonds	Tyco Suzuki by TAS	63
10	Graeme Irwin	Samsung Yamaha	51



NEVILLE BRADSHAW

"Today was a good day. In the first race I didn't get a good start and came from way back to third. I caught the leaders and had the fastest lap times so I knew my pace was good. In the second race also not so good out of the gate but I went from 14th to fourth and caught onto the back of the leaders so I had the speed. In the last race I had a much better start and had a good race to finish in second overall on the day and second in the championship. I'm really looking forward to the next round."



MARC DE REUVER

"In the first heat I had a really good start, then suddenly I was in the lead and I won. It was a bit emotional because I never thought I would win ever again because of all my history. In the second heat I was pumped and then I crashed in the start with Simpson, Dougan, Whatley and I don't know who else. Everything was bent so I couldn't continue. In the final heat because I didn't ride so much in the second I was a bit tight, the track was a lot different and I ended sixth. If you look at the other round it's going better and better."



EBB kicks ass at Canada Heights

STR KTM's Matiss Karro takes the major prize on the day with his 8-1-3 scorecard edging out Tyco Suzuki's Stephen Sword on the better-last-moto tie-breaker rule. Swordy speeds to an opening moto second – after scrapping with eventual winner Marc de Reuver for the duration – before backing that up with a solid third and a fifth.

Joining Karro and Sword on the podium is a second Scot – Shaun Simpson. Woody's normally a dead cert for the win at the Heights but this time around a moto two tip over in turn one with de Reuver, Kristian Whatley and Jason Dougan sticks a duff 'un in his scorecard and costs him dearly. Still, a 3-9-1 gives Simpson the final podium spot and more importantly keeps

him in the hunt for his first MX1 title.

Behind Karro, Sword, Simpson and Stribbos there's a 10-point gap to the best of the rest – Kristian Whatley. Still suffering the after-effects of his qualifying get off at FatCat, K-What runs 4-7-7 to beat de Reuver (1-DNF-6), Martin Barr (14-4-8) and PAR team-mate Dorren Coutts (11-6-9) to fifth overall.

In the MX1 championship chase Stribbos leads by 16 ahead of Karro who's got a two-point buffer on Simpson. Sword and Gert Krestinov – who loses big points when his front brake jams on in moto two at Canada Heights – are best of the rest as the series gets set to swing through Lyng and Milton Park next month...



Arabian Knights!

**THE RED BULL X-FIGHTERS WORLD TOUR
KICKS OFF IN DUBAI WHERE LEVI SHERWOOD
JUMPS INTO AN EARLY LEAD...**

Photos by Global Newsroom/Red Bull Content Pool

The biggest, baddest and glitziest freestyle tour on the planet, the Red Bull X-Fighters takes the world's best FMX riders to the world's most glamorous locations where they throw out their best tricks in a bid to win a share of a million-dollar prize purse.

The 2012 edition takes in six stops on four continents over six months and kicks off in April in Dubai on the white sands of the Jumeirah Beach Residence where it's 20-year-old Kiwi Levi Sherwood who tops qualification ahead of Norwegian Andre Villa.

"I was pretty happy about how it went,"

grins Levi. "I just want to go out there and have fun and do the best I can but stay safe. I'll be really happy if I walk out with a trophy so whatever one it is I'll be happy."

For Andre it's an emotional performance, coming on the back of a career-threatening leg injury and the 30-year-old is fighting back the tears following quali.

"I wasn't sure I was ever going to ride again," he admits. "I just thought about all those months, I thought about then getting to the crutches stage, to when I started walking again. I'm so glad. I've worked so hard to get back."

>>



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Levi Sherwood comes out swinging to leave Dubai leading the title chase



© Predrag Vuckovic



Right: Aussie Rob Adelberg grabs a shock second

© Jörg Mitter

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Rob Adelberg nails a Cordova Flip – the Aussie shakes up the established stars in Dubai

Chilean Javier Villegas kicks off only his second season on the Red Bull X-Fighters tour with a strong third but defending champion Dany Torres struggles with an ankle injury and can only manage eighth. By finishing outside the top six the Spaniard misses out on automatic progression to the quarter finals and is forced to battle it out in the opening round for one of the remaining two places.

"I made a mistake on my last trick," concedes Torres. "I skipped the second qualifying round because I was feeling pain in my ankle and I thought it would be better to wait for round one tonight."

When the main event gets under way in front of 20,000 freestyle fans it's clear that Sherwood's still carrying his form from qualifying and the legendary flexibility that earned him the nickname 'Rubberband Boy' helps him to the top of the podium.

"It means a lot," he says after celebrating his fourth Red Bull X-Fighters win and his first since

Battersea Power Station in 2010 before admitting, "I didn't have much confidence coming into it."

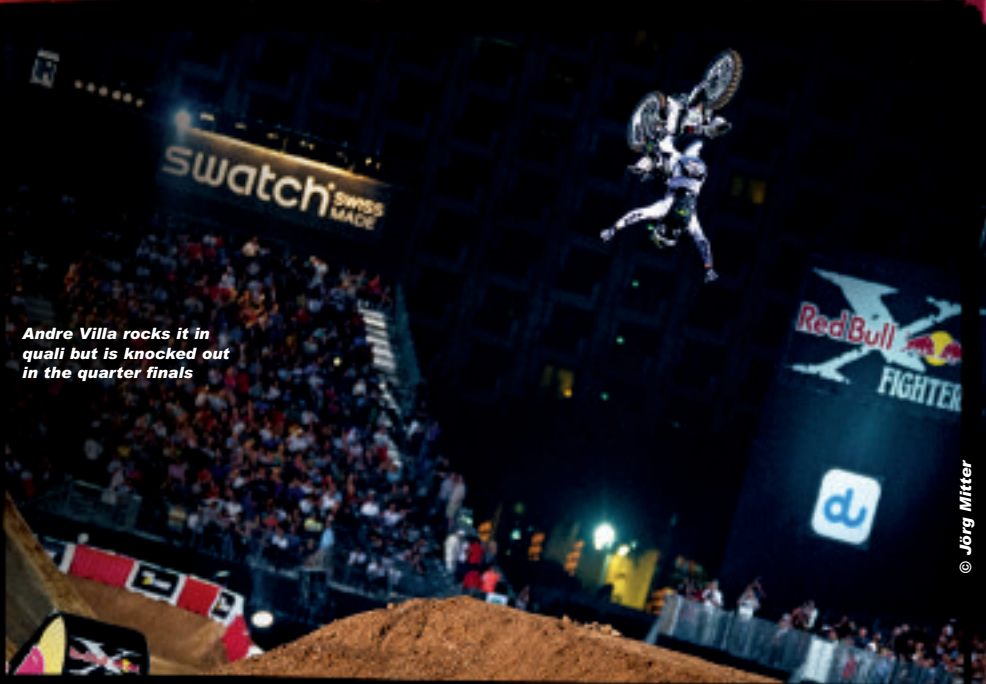
Villa's dream return to competition turns quickly into a bit of a nightmare after he gets knocked out in the quarter finals and finishes an eventual fifth but it's even worse for Torres whose title defence kicks off with a lowly eighth.

With two of the favourites struggling the way is clear for a couple of surprise performers with Aussie Rob Adelberg and Villegas making it a Southern Hemisphere 1-2-3 in second and third.

"After years of sacrifice I finally made it," beams the Chilean who's based himself in California to further his freestyle career. "I'm not going to stop here. I want to be on the podium all season."

From here the Red Bull X-Fighters tour heads to Glen Helen for round two on May 12 before stopping off in Istanbul (June 16), Madrid (July 20) and Munich (August 11) before signing off in Sydney on October 6.

Andre Villa rocks it in quali but is knocked out in the quarter finals



© Jörg Mitter

Chilean Javier Villegas makes it an all-Southern Hemisphere podium with third



© Jörg Mitter

Former champ Mat Rebeaud can only come home 10th



© Predrag Vuckovic

Red Bull X-fighters

SERIES STANDINGS

1	Levi Sherwood (NZ)	100
2	Rob Adelberg (Aus)	80
3	Javier Villegas (Chl)	65
4	Josh Sheehan (Aus)	55
5	Andre Villa (Nor)	45
6	Todd Potter (USA)	35
7	Edgar Torronteras (Esp)	30
8	Dany Torres (Esp)	25
9	Eigo Sato (Jap)	20
10	Mat Rebeaud (Swz)	5

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VALEFORCE!

North West-based Vale MXC provide this month's filling for the latest Club Sandwich and the first thing catching my eye is the provision for eight championship rounds rolled out over just four weekends. The idea to go with all double-headers came about last term in an effort to negate some of the spiralling travel costs and it's proved popular.

Repeating the winning formula, the 2012 season kicked off recently with rounds one and two at the Leisure Lakes complex near Southport. At the scenic circuit club PR man and all-round good guy Malc Hamer confirmed the popularity of doubling up and the policy saw increased rider numbers – 330 – attending the opening Bo Motor Oils Easter weekend bash.

As an off-shoot of the original Vale of Rossendale club, Vale MXC formed some 14 or so years ago. Since 2007 Malc and John Mac have been the driving force and together they rescued an outfit that had fallen on hard times. John moved on in 2010 but by then Vale had regained a prominent foothold. The present team with Malc still at the helm have been in place since 2010 and they are now one of the largest outfits in the North West. They opted to join the MCF in 2011. Malc had this to say on the MCF and other various factors key to Vale success.

"We moved over to the MCFederation basically because they were the affiliation seemingly more dedicated to the schoolboy and youth side of our sport. The packages on offer from the MCF were almost untouchable – and in

the present climate this has been a major factor helping the club to grow.

"Local motocross businesses have also been a key factor in the club's success – Feehily MX, Spiral Graffix and MX500 have all supported the club superbly well over the last few years – and this allows us to give our members great prizes. The kids' faces when they receive their trophies is absolutely priceless!

"Many thanks to all our sponsors and special thanks also to the present Chairman Keith Needham, Vice Chair Darren Middleton and the rest of my dedicated team who do a great job including Michaela Waterworth, Anne Menarry, Lee Smith, Ashley Maguire, Dave Foster and Hayley Middleton.

"Finally, if I had to give reasons as to why

VALEMXC

CHAIRMAN: KEITH NEEDHAM **VICE CHAIRMAN:** DARREN MIDDLETON
CLUB PR: MALC HAMER **CHIEF LAPSCORER:** MICHAELA WATERWORTH
EMAIL: VALEMEMBERSHIP@BTINTERNET.CO.UK **WEBSITE:** WWW.VALEMXC.CO.UK
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come and race with Vale MXC I would say we are enthusiastic, passionate about what we do, we try to make our events fun every time and we always source quality top-flight circuits to race on."

Thanks for all of that Malc!

Now moving on to the weekend action and in the Autos Aaron Brown and MX500 pilot Adam Wells stand out as they rack up three race wins apiece. Aaron claims the round one victory with Adam nailing the winning spoils on day two. Lewis Cooper and Brett Jones are the gutsy duo battling hard in the leaders' wake and they claim a hard-fought bronze each.

Over the two days Rossi Beard, Scott Russell, Dane Reeves, Kurtis Griffiths and Danny Clarke are the main names in the frame taking the 65cc podium positions. The round one thrash proves to be the harder-fought affair and it's an electrifying show from Beard that catches the eye. Beard cleans up in style by taking all three heat wins.

Meanwhile, over in the Smallies a terrific head-to-head championship challenge is shaping up between round one winner Daniel Shepherd and round two victor Luke Reading. Reading currently has a four-point championship advantage but with James McFayden and Dexter Douglas also proving strong enough to nail heat wins and with Nathan Claughan firing well this section is too close to call.

At round one in the Biggies, Jake Ryan has no option other than to play second fiddle behind a super-charged Will Jeonney who takes three race wins. At round two, however, with no Jeonney to worry about Jake leaves nothing to chance claiming a terrific maximum points haul. Joele Hart goes 3-2 over the weekend in overall terms but in championship terms Jake currently leads the way over Hart with Sheldon Fox third.

With Thomas Davies and Sam Wragg chalking up an overall win and a second place finish each just five points are the difference in the Rookies with Davies taking an early championship lead. Wragg sits in second with Ryan Elliot in third. In terms of heat wins over the weekend Davies nails three, two go Wragg's way with Saturday racer Luke Newman claiming the other. Also a word of praise for 13-year-old Cumbrian giant Tayla Smith who battles his way to a fine fifth place overall at round one.

CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP REMAINING ROUNDS

Rnd 3/4 May 12/13 Preston Docks
Rnd 5/6 June 16/17 DMP, Finningley
Rnd 7/8 Sept 15/16 Leisure Lakes

Ben Rice



Sid was last year's stand-out
Small Wheel warrior



SUPERSID! SW CHAMP MOVES UP A DIVISION

After clinching last year's Red Bull Elite Youth Cup SW85cc title at a down-to-the-wire final round at Culham, Sid Evans has traded up a class for 2012. We caught up with him to find out how things are going for the young hotshot...

Rage: Things got pretty tight at the end of last season – were you worried that you might lose out on the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup championship at Culham?

SE: "Yeah, it was definitely a factor in things and that's what made it exciting at the end. At the end of the year it was still tight and it was still good to be riding with everyone. At Culham my bike was playing up a bit and I made some mistakes during the races – actually, I think I ended up DNFing the first two which meant the championship went down to the last race so it was quite good fun really!"

Rage: Fun or totally nerve-shredding?

SE: "It was nerve-wracking but that's what it's all about really."

Rage: How did it feel to lift the EYC title after all of that hard work you put in?

SE: "It felt like a real relief you know? I didn't feel really happy – it's really hard to explain. You can sort of see it happening and you keep thinking about it during the year and then when it finally does come you're happy about it but you're not as happy as you think you'd be – does that make sense?"

Rage: What's been the best bit about winning the title?

SE: "Just to think that I've managed to do a whole championship – I've put in the work to do it and I now have the reward for that, that's the best bit about it. Immediately after it there were a few people wanting interviews, a couple of teams showed some interest and quite a few small sponsors noticed me more."

Rage: Will we see you in the BW this year and if so who will you be riding for?

SE: "Yes I'll be in the BW this year. I won't be riding for any team as such, I'll just have my sponsors and the people that help me and we'll be going out and doing our own thing."

Rage: Does this mean that dad will be playing a big part then?

SE: "Yeah, quite a big part and Chris Barker and

people like that, they really help out."

Rage: What bike will you be on?

SE: "It'll be the KTM 85cc."

Rage: Looking at your results from last season you seem to go equally well on both hardpack and the sand. Which is your favourite to ride on?

SE: "My favourite is the hardpack just because I find it more enjoyable but I've been riding a lot more on sand lately and I think I've sped up on that. I think that come the start of the season I'll be equal on both but I'll enjoy riding the hardpack more."

Rage: Your clean sweep at Canada Heights in the Elite Youth Cup was the only one of the season in the SW class – is that one of your favourite tracks?

SE: "It's my home track but I'd never really ridden it. I really enjoyed riding it, it's got a lot of character, it takes you on a journey each lap almost so I enjoy it."

Rage: Stepping up into the BW do you see the competition being much harder this season?

SE: "I think Conrad Mewse will be the biggest competition but I think everyone has sped up and are enjoying the big wheels so there will be a lot of competition, I just think Conrad will be the one to beat."

Rage: Who will be working on your bike for you this year?

SE: "Chris Barker – he's going to be helping us out a lot this year – and of course my dad will be working a lot on the bike."

Rage: How has everything gone for you with pre-season prep?

SE: "It's been one of the best pre-season run-ups I've ever had. I've been on the bike straight away, I've gelled with it straight away, I've got a lot of riding done and I'm really happy!"

Rage: What are your goals for 2012?

SE: "To come away with a few race wins and possibly a few round wins I suppose and just to ride the best I can."

Rage: Anyone you'd like to thank?

SE: "Chris Barker at Chris Barker Services, KAS Suspension, Fox Europe, DEP Pipes, my mum and dad and everyone that kindly sponsors me."



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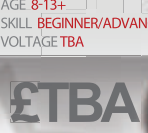
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Tom Kelly grabs the holeshot at Milton Park



Jack Gardner in BYN action



Small Wheel action from Milton Park



Ricky Roderick heads to a BSMA clean sweep at Mepal

WIN! WIN! WIN!

DBR-CUSTOMISED GO-MX IGNITION COVER UP FOR GRABS...

This one's for all you KTM SX50 and SX65 owners out there who want a super-trick Dirt Bike Rider logo'd GO-MX ignition cover to bolt on your race bike. We've hooked up with top parts producers GO-MX to offer all our readers the chance to win this prize which is not only tougher than stock but much better looking n'all!

If you like the look of these covers but for some reason fancy a different logo or image etched on there in place of the Dirt Bike Rider logo head to www.gomxproducts.com to see what they can do for you but if you're happy to spread the DBR love then read on and get ready to win big!

To be in with a chance of winning this outstanding prize – this month it's the SX50cc cover, next month we'll have a new comp for the SX65cc cover – we want you to tell us the name of the Red Bull KTM rider who won his third AMA Supercross Main Event of the season in Salt Lake City at the end of April.

Was it: **A: Ryan Dungey**
B: Marvin Musquin
C: Ken Roczen

When you've figured out the answer log on to www.dirtbikerider.com or use your smartphone to scan the QR code that will take you directly to our homepage. Follow the competitions link to dirtZone, fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The comp closes on **June 8** and the winner will be the first correct answer drawn at random after this date.



RAGE ROUND-UP!

TIME TO CHECK OUT THE EARLY-SEASON PECKING ORDER...

With the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup gig at Landrake gig postponed until May 12-13, April unfortunately missed out on the opening round of the UK's premier youth series. But with Maxxis MXY2 and the inaugural round of the British Youth Nationals taking place as well as BSMA and Masters the 2012 national season pecking order is taking shape nonetheless.

With two podium finishes in his first two nationals in the Auto ranks seven-year-old Vampires Rocker Jack Grayshon is worrying section favourites Bobby Bruce and Louie Kessell. In the 65s 10-year-old Gary Ashley dominated at BSMA Mepal with five race wins and then ran second overall at Milton Park in the BYN. Ashley along with Powerband 11-year-olds Christopher Mills and Tom Grimshaw are the class of the ACU field – ultimately Mills is on top with Grimshaw in third. Scott Russell, Jack Scott and Rossi Beard also caught the eye.

In the Smallies it was Albie Wilkie who had a runaway five wins at Mepal but no such luck in Northamptonshire where Taylor Hammal dominated with four classy race wins. Keenan Hird took the other win but he had to settle for third overall, trumped for silver by an impressive

Zander Brown show in his rookie SW national.

Over in the biggies Conrad Mewse was the talk of the Mepal paddock, laying down lap times that matched the fastest of the weekend across all classes – adult experts included. Mewse took four race wins and was only beaten by a fuel pipe that came adrift. In a quality field Sid Evans picked up the missing win together with second overall as Henry Williams and Jamie Carpenter finished in third and fourth.

Another ranking BW field at Milton Park but this time a completely fresh podium as Twisted 7's Todd Kellett made a great return from injury with a 1-1-1-2-2 card. Josh Coleman took second overall with Rob Yates in third. Josh Gilbert on the Buildbase Honda had a day one nightmare but recovered superbly on day two with a brace of race wins and fourth overall.

In the Masters Jordan Moxey has nailed seven out of eight BW heat wins with Tyrone Cleaver hanging onto championship second just in front of Oli Benton. In the Wulfsport SW division Henry Siddiqui has six wins from eight starts and he leads the way from Howard Wainwright and Matt Brame.

In the Senior/Open ranks there are even more stats to digest as Maxxis MXY2 leads the way

with heat wins for Oakleaf Kawasaki's Tommy Alba and Lanes Kawasaki pilot James Harrison. Alba unfortunately crocked himself in race two down at Canada Heights as Harrison took the overall running 6-1. Honda-mounted Rob Davidson claimed podium second with a 5-3 and Dan Thornhill snatched bronze with 8-2.

There were even more highs for wildcard Suzuki ace Thornhill at Milton Park where he scored second overall although he had no answer to Liam Garland who guided his RFX Kawasaki to four wins. Harrison claimed the other win but that wasn't enough to make the overall podium as Brad Todd in third overall joined winner Garland and Thornhill. Next came Jack Kelly, Alex Meadows and Aaron Pipon.

Thornhill and Garland also went head-to-head at Foxhill for round two of the Masters and once again Garland stole the show with three heat wins. Garland missed the Masters opener so Thornhill has a clear Masters MXY2 championship lead followed by Jay Thomas, Scott Aldridge and Ricky Roderick. Roderick has also been making the headlines in the BSMA 125s with a round one whitewash at Mepal!

After all of this Rage names Liam Garland as the outstanding April rider of the month...

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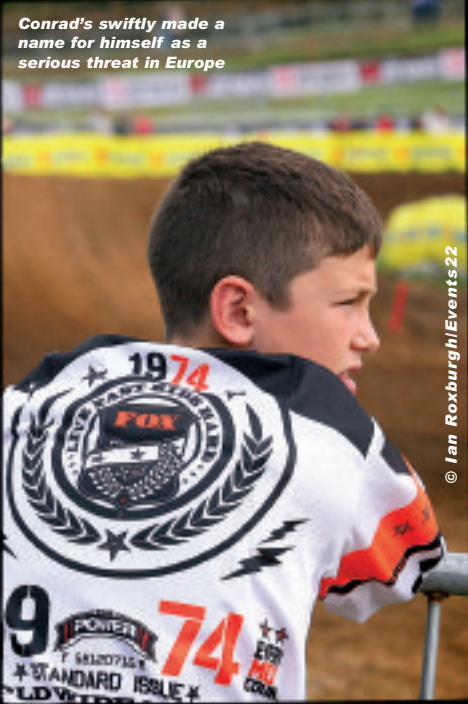
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Conrad's swiftly made a name for himself as a serious threat in Europe

EUROVISION!

CONRAD DISPLAYS DUTCH COURAGE...

Conrad Mewse started this year's Dutch ONK series up against some of Europe's finest giving away two years or more in age and experience – and he's also been travelling up to and beyond 1000 miles each weekend to compete on circuits that are completely foreign to him but oh-so familiar to his main rivals.

The top Dutch pairing of Davy Pootjes and Bas Vaessen have a wealth of home knowledge to draw upon – and a handy war chest reported to be some 40,000 Euros to fund their varied efforts. The cash is essentially stumped up by the KNMV – Holland's ruling motorsports body to help elite riders towards GP status – so all things considered the odds looked heavily stacked against Mewse in his rookie Euro championship.

But that was then, this is now and the simple fact is Conrad is the new Euro Kid on the block and with five rounds already carded he's within striking distance of ONK gold. With series-long improvement Conrad currently sits in championship third – just nine points behind leader Vaessen and three behind series favourite Pootjes. So far in the competition Conrad has collected all of his points racing as a 12-year-old (he actually became a teenager on April 21) competing against lads who are primarily 14 and 15.

So far in 2012 Pootjes and Vaessen have dominated the German ADAC series together with the early EMX 85cc Northern Euro qualifiers. So all facts considered it brings Conrad's magnificent 2012 efforts into a much

clearer focus. Conrad Mewse the best 13-year-old in Europe? There are quite a few in the Dutch paddocks thinking that way right now.

The series kicked off at Oss on March 4 where Conrad ran 3-3 as Pootjes (1-1) and Vaessen (2-2) held sway. Significantly, however, Conrad yanked a superb race two holey and he impressively lead the opening four laps. Just one week later at round two at Halle confidence built even further when Glen Coldenhoff strode across the paddock to compliment Conrad on what he described as an awesome riding style.

With a 3-2 and second overall Conrad duly upped the ante and race two was once again the stand-out highlight. This time Conrad lead for seven laps before eventually finishing just five seconds behind race winner Pootjes. Vaessen finished hot on Mewse's tail in what was the best race of the series to date. The heat two result although brilliant left Conrad a bit miffed – he thought he should have won it – but as a bonus he realised he had the race pace to win.

March 18 saw round three go off at Pootjes' favourite track, Herde. Pootjes was faster than Conrad in qualification but in race trim Conrad lead heat one until mid-race distance. Pootjes took over but completely unfazed Conrad tracked him doggedly before ultimately delivering the killer punch in the closing stages. A classic race win for Mewse – his first of the series – and the all-important psychological edge of putting a clean pass on Pootjes.

Heat two saw Conrad make his worst gate of the series and he was down in 28th at one point

until a determined charge through the field pulled him through to fourth for second overall.

At this point in the season with round four at Mill beckoning it was clearly a three-man championship but Conrad had to be content with a 3-3 finish as Pootjes and Vaessen were flying but at Emmen for round five on April 15 Conrad magnificently turned the tables, laying down a resounding 1-1. Conrad's dominance showed first with a fastest lap early in moto one and then a dying embers retake on Vaessen to record a terrific win. Race two was equally memorable as Mewse put the hammer down gate-to-flag, stretching out a 35-second lead over Vaessen.

Just for the record there have been three round wins for Pootjes and one each for Mewse and Vaessen. Pootjes as in past seasons has been a tad erratic at some rounds but Mewse and Vaessen have been the very models of solid consistency. The crown can easily go any one of three ways but Conrad Mewse is the rider with the growing momentum. All the best Conrad!

Elsewhere in the competition there have been other creditable shows from Brits. Lewis Houghton and Jamie Carpenter have raced all rounds recording a best of sixth overall for Houghton at round one and 11th overall for Carpenter at round five. Jay Hague also made a single appearance at round one where he finished in 11th and Greg Hyett took 16th.

The sixth and penultimate ONK round takes place on May 28 at Axel with the series finale held off until October 21 at Harfsen.



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GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?
 THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK



LIFE OF BRYAN!

AFTER FILMING A VIRAL AD FOR A WELL-KNOWN BRAND OF BO BASHER BRY GETS BLOWN IN THE PITS AND THEN WITNESSES A SPOT OF CHIN-STRAP STUPIDITY...

Words by **Bryan MacKenzie** Photo by **Sutty**

I'll start off by letting you know a little bit about what I finished off with in my last column – filming that Suremen ad. It wasn't for TV or anything – they called it a viral video for the internet, you know the kinda advert that comes up at the start of a YouTube clip that you shut down as soon as you can!

It was a little different filming for someone other than the regular guys I'm used to dealing with within the industry and targeting a completely different audience – non-moto guys. All the dudes – director, editors, camera guys and PR lady – were really cool and it was pretty stressfree but it was a different sort of filming than the regular thing I'm used to. Some of the shots these guys were after were total 'gay bar' and you could tell they were non-motocross and didn't share the same eye for what makes a cool shot.

It made me realise though why whenever MX is shown on TV or in movies it comes across as a load of turd. It's basically just the director's hazy perception of what motocross is that comes through and that's why all the footage is always a bit ropey with a scene of some dude chicken winging the throttle on a YZ250 so hard it's like he's trying to snap the cable to a dubbed-over soundtrack of a CBR600. Freddie Flintoff was a no-show too as apparently he had a 'violent crash' while shooting the mountain bike section the day before and his agent pulled the plug on him throwing a leg over the #121 machine.

Professional MX isn't all glitz and razzamatazz though and one of the arse aches of the job is putting the awning up every weekend. I'm a firm believer in mucking in and not leaving the boys high and dry to take the job on themselves, purely cause I know how much of a pain it is and to be a man down would make their job even harder. But as if it isn't hard enough, to put it up in the wind adds a whole other element of difficulty to it. Think 'kite' which by definition means a

light frame covered with a thin material flown in the wind at the end of a length of string. Now exchange the string for the side of a race truck and a truck awning essentially shares the exact same materials as a kite. Only ours is 102 square metres and doesn't come pre-built or with a team to build it – that job lies firmly at our feet!

While putting it up one time last month at Duns we were really fighting it. With only four of us on the job we couldn't spread ourselves out enough to construct and tame it at the same time and at one point I was ambitiously trying to hold the whole thing down on my own – all 11 emaciated stone of me! In fact I think I might even share the same definition as a kite! I was honestly bricking it as a strong enough blast of wind could have fired me 10 metres into the air if I didn't surrender the death grip I had on her! Luckily, though, BC – whose weight is undisclosed – saw sense and ended wearing the roof sheet like a toga just to stop it from taking off!

On a serious note now, I'd like to address a major safety issue that I witnessed twice in as many weeks. I'm sure about 99 per cent of you guys will not even need to think about this every time you throw a leg over your mud-cycle but clearly there's a handful that do...

One weekend last month I was watching a couple of dudes out shredding at one of my locals. They were both pretty sketchy looking geezers and were locked in a battle for Transit van bragging rights when they came up to a left-hander just in front of me. So's to be sure he hit the inside berm and not to lose any ground, one guy – who'd been pretty well splattered with roost – instead of whipping the goggles off just flipped his lid right up in a visor-esque manoeuvre and wore his helmet like a beanie. He was looking out the bottom of the chinpiece while navigating the turn, then fired it back down again and got hard on the gas after he made the corner!

WTF! This guy was by no means the epitome of MX racer as naturally he didn't even own race kit – he was running jeans with the classic button-up red check shirt – and was blazing doobies back at the van in between sessions. But surely he isn't too cool to strap his lid on?

Then I was at a race last month and in between motos was checking out the lay of the land looking for lines and stuff, as you do. The Clubman class had just started and I was standing about a half-a-lap round the track next to a tabletop. The leader then pulled an insane endo and as catastrophic as the current situation was for this C class ripper, that wasn't the major issue! As the dude ate sh*t – and I mean proper ate sh*t, cartwheeling through the air and stuff – his helmet actually came off! I swear to god as I stood there watching I thought the guy's head had come off! I just seen the lid rolling across the ground like a cannon ball and genuinely for a second or two thought he had been decapitated! I totally pat the shants!

His helmet came to a stop in the main line and got mowed down a couple of times before the guy managed to get his head back in it and back in the race! Unbelievable! What are these guys thinking? Do they think it's cool or something not to protect their heads like the lads from Georgie Shore when they're interfering with little mankies without putting a helmet on their wee soldier...

Don't get me wrong, I laughed my ass off at both of these incidents as it was totally ridiculous and I've never seen anything like it in my 20 years of racing but I'm pretty sure I'd drop a valve and have a heart seizure if I was to see another guy lose his nugget quite so soon! So do us all a favour please and strap your helmet on! Oh and wear a condom too...

[Handwritten signature]
#121

SIDELINED!

mac211

BILLY'S DOWN AND OUT DOWN UNDER AFTER A BIG BAIL AT ROUND TWO OF THE AUSSIE OUTDOORS CHAMPIONSHIP...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Matty Muir

Seems like my dreamy start to the 2012 MX season has turned into a bit of a nightmare! Wish I could wake up from this one but there's no light at the end of the tunnel for at least another eight weeks after sustaining a wrist injury at round two so I'm just gonna have to suck it up and look forward to my return, hopefully for the last two rounds of the Australian nationals.

Round one seemed to be going pretty well as we arrived at the track – it was just how I had pictured it in my last column. The track looked awesome and everyone was excited to get racing. As we started turning laps it was pretty obvious Townley was in his element. It was actually a bit embarrassing how much faster he was by the end of the day but we've all had days like that and today was gonna be his day!

The track was very similar to Langrish at home, also known as the Ken Hall. I was actually feeling pretty good and had the next fastest lap times after Townley in the races but bad starts and a big crash in race one kinda put me off my target for that weekend. After pushing through the pack in race one, I had caught up to Todd Waters and after trying to make a pass down the inside of one of the hills I caught a little whisky throttle in the braking bumps and ended up high-siding pretty big. I went down hard, burst my radiator and gave myself the biggest dead leg ever!

I had to pull off and get the bike sorted for the next back-to-back race but I was forced to go out on my spare bike as the damage was too much. In the second race I got going and found myself in third behind Brad. I could see he was struggling with armpump and I was feeling good but I got caught behind him and couldn't make the pass. Further into the race and after taking a lot of roost I tried to set up a pass on Brad but lost the

front end with a lap to go and ended up coming home in seventh.

Unhappy with my results I decided to play it safe in the final 30-minute moto to make sure I scored some solid points. I took the holeshot and rode at my own pace. Townley came by on the second lap, followed by Coppins towards the end. I just rode smooth and precise and didn't push too hard and was rewarded with a comfortable third place. It was nice to get a top three result but I knew I wasn't riding my fastest and that annoyed me a little.

During the week my leg swelled up and the bruising came out pretty severely. Turns out I gave myself a nice haematoma that first race so I was on the couch for three days before I could manage the easy task of walking! I felt good about myself that I managed to finish the races considering this injury but I got on with it and carried on cycling and managed to ride a week later.

The next round was Coonabarabran where last year I had a moto win and was battling for the overall so I was excited to get to this track and get the ball rolling. I wanted to get a bit closer to Townley before he left too as that would have taken me ahead of the rest of the field so I had lots of personal goals and was looking forward to racing a cool track.

The weekend started off on Saturday with practice and qualifying. We were searching for bike set-up all day after trying a new shock set-up during the week but I was still feeling good and felt I was riding fast. There have been constant issues with the timing this year unfortunately and when it came to qualifying practice the timing was down! We had all the mechanics on the clock and after the session they were pretty confident I would have a top three position with the time they

clocked but as the times rolled out the official result was a qualifying position of 10th for me and ninth for Brad! I don't think I have ever been outside the top six in qualifying since I've been over here and I felt my lap was pretty on it. Brad was also a bit pissed but there was nothing we could do and had to just get on with it.

The races got under way and I had a good start in race one. I was riding in second place for most of the race, battling for the lead with Jake Moss. With a couple laps to go I took a different line trying to set up a pass for the lead and stalled it! I brought it home in seventh or eighth – same deal as round one! Not happy!

Race two got going and it was the same as the first race. Riding second the whole race and battling with Brad and Jay, I settled into a good pace and started to work on the leader Moss. There was a long rolling whoop section where I noticed Moss was using a different line and was making up some time so the next lap I followed him into the whoop section but hit a square edge and had a big swap before being ejected over the top. With a sore wrist, head and knee I picked myself up and got back to the truck.

I knew I was hurt so went straight to the Racesafe ambulance and got checked out. Some painkillers and strapping later I was lined up for the third and final race. It wasn't meant to be and I got caught up in a first turn pile-up. Starting from the back it took me a while to get a pace going. I wasn't really on my game and my wrist was hurting but I kept it going and finished the 30-minute moto in 18th or something. I knew I wasn't fit to race but we tough it out sometimes. A visit to the hospital during the week confirmed the worst so I headed to the pub to have a few beers with Big Bill and reflect on what could have been...

BD 11



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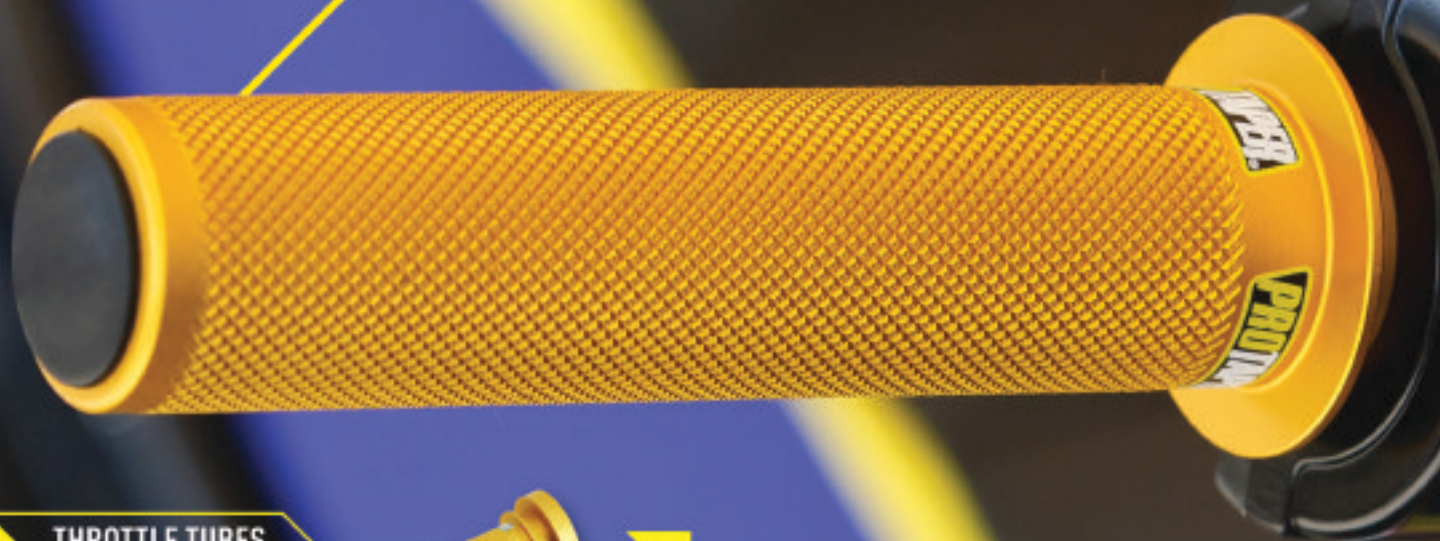
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THROTTLE TUBES



MODEL: THROTTLE TUBE
TYPE: THROTTLE

EVO HANDLEBARS



MODEL: EVO (BLACK)
BEND: 12.5°

SE HANDLEBARS



MODEL: SE (SILVER)
BEND: 12.5°

HANDLEBAR PADS



MODEL: HANDLEBAR PADS
FEATURES: BREATHER PIPE CUT-OUT

GRIPS



MODEL: GRIP (GREY)
TYPE: SINGLE DENSITY - FULL WAFFLE



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